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KAIJU-FAN

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The Magazine of Japanese Science Fiction & Fantasy

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Front Cover: John Woodard contributes a "War-Torn Kaiju Fan tribute to the Beatles" *Sp! Appare* album cover in celebration of our 10th issue. Inside Front Cover: A breathtaking Space Gunshi illustration from the profile Mark Nagata. Inside Front Cover Fold-Out: Mark Jones turns up the heat with an awe-inspiring *Godzilla vs. Destroyer* spread. Inside Back Cover: *Mothra 3* Japanese press illustration from the 1998 Tokyo International Film Festival. Back Cover: Mark Nagata brings together with his extraordinary portrait of *Godzilla*. Don't argue to these talented artists!

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NEXT ISSUE - In March, *Gamera III: The Awakening of Iryx* hits theater screens in Japan. Stay tuned to the pages of *Kaiju-Fan* #11 for full coverage of this much-anticipated kaiju film, as well as for our the next installment of "Toho In America" featuring *King Kong vs. Godzilla* and *Godzilla Plus Godzilla* reviews, *Kollectible Kaiju* and lots more!

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TOHO DROPS YEAR-END BOMBSHELL: GODZILLA MILLENNIUM!

On December 14, 1998, just days after the theatrical premiere of *Mothra 3* in Japan, Toho dropped a bombshell of a press release (and an early Christmas gift to *kaiju* fans everywhere) as was first reported by the Reuters news service. Three years after rearing its most famous screen son in the 1955 film, *Godzilla vs. Destroyer*, Toho announced it will bring back *Godzilla* for the 2000 New Year's holiday in Japan in a film entitled *Godzilla Millennium*. According to an unidentified Toho spokesman who was quoted in the Reuters report, it was apparent that Japanese fans were once again thrilled with Sony/Tristar's big budget *Godzilla* film, which was released only five months prior to the announcement. "The shape of the American version of *Godzilla* was so different from the Japanese version that there was a clamor among fans and company officials to create a *Godzilla* unique to Japan," the Toho spokesman said.

Many fans east and west of the Pacific took this news as Toho's lack of faith in both Sony's handling of their character and any subsequent Tristar sequels. In a *Variety* article on December 16, a Toho spokesman stated: "Sony Pictures has asked us not to make our own version of *Godzilla*, but there is no contractual relationship barring us from bringing back the Toho version of *Godzilla*." It was previously believed from many sources, including several close to *Kaiju-Fan*, that the contract between Toho and Sony held a stipulation that Toho was not to create any further *Godzilla* films for the Japanese market until at least two years after the last Tristar release.

Toho had previously boasted that Tristar's *Godzilla* would set one of the widest theatrical openings in Japanese film history, with the film showing in 389 theaters. But although *Godzilla*'s first weekend was record-breaking, initially out-grossing even the 1997 mega-hit, *Meruoka Hime*, the film was quickly bounced from theaters after yielding only \$32 million at the box office. *Deep Impact*, which was released about the same time in Japan as *Godzilla* by Toho competitor Shochiku, proved to be the big film of the summer, playing on approximately 200 screens and taking in about \$63 million at the box office.

"The Tristar *Godzilla* (film) was not the big hit it was expected to be, and we received numerous complaints from fans saying that they did not like the touches put on the monster for its move to America," the Toho spokesman continued in *Variety*. "We do not want to lose the dedicated *Godzilla* fans."

Around the same time, Toho updated the official Japanese *Godzilla* web site at <http://www.godzilla.co.jp/> to include the following message from Heisei *Godzilla* series and *Godzilla Millennium* producer, Shogo Tsuyumura (translated from original Japanese): "Production of a new Japanese *Godzilla* series has begun. Due to the heated outcry of Japanese *Godzilla* fans, *Godzilla* will land in Tokyo in the year 2000, A.D. The message goes on to explain that the King of Monsters' former "indestructibility" and "invincibility" would "not be changed," although fans could look forward to a "different style, new mystery and usage" in *Godzilla Millennium*.

Almost as quickly as the announcement had been made, Dean Devlin, producer of the Tristar film, began damage control in regards to what some viewed as less-than-flattering news. In response to a fan posting on the Centropolis Internet message board, Devlin stated that "...we're thrilled that Toho is continuing on with the classic *Godzilla* features. It was the classic creature that captured our imagination in the first place and inspired us to create our version." Incidentally, Devlin went on to state that, "the fact that people have been showing interest in the old creature is a dream come true for us," obviously oblivious to the fact that *Godzilla* has enjoyed worldwide popularity for 44 years prior to the Tristar film's release.

In regards to the rumors that there would be no Tristar *Godzilla* sequel in light of *Godzilla Millennium*, Devlin stated, "There is no truth at all that Toho has revoked our rights. Toho is a partner in our film and had a hand in every decision in the making of our movie. Together we are proceeding with the sequel as planned. There is more than enough room out there for both creators to exist and flourish!" Devlin also contradicted what had been previously said by the Toho spokesman by claim-

ing, "There is no truth to the statement that Sony had asked (Toho) not to do (their own film). No one at the studio that I have talked with had known that they were going to come out with this announcement at this time." The producer also took a few parting shots at the press, the media and certain fan circles. "This whole idea that films compete with each other is something entirely created by the press and the media (not to mention very zealous Internet users). There's more than enough room in the world for both of our *Godzilla* movies."

Then, in early January, as quickly as the announcement had come, Toho did a complete about-face in regards to their position on the Sony franchise. "We at Toho are deeply dismayed by a recent article in the press announcing our plans to bring back a version of *Godzilla* because that story did not represent our feelings in spirit or in fact on several points. We are deeply gratified by the worldwide box office success of Tristar's *Godzilla* and since it was always our intention to bring back the classic *Godzilla*, we appreciate the support our partners at Sony and Centropolis have given us to achieve our goal. Currently we enthusiastically support the highly successful *Godzilla* animated series and Sony's sequel to the film. We hope that this will put to rest any misinterpretations resulting from previous statements." Some view Toho's statements as a public relations move to voice their stamp of approval on the Tristar franchise and the subsequent royalties to follow any future projects.

Since then, the production schedule for *Godzilla Millennium* has been posted to Toho's *Godzilla* web site. The schedule into the completion of the film's script by March, with pre-production to commence in April and lasting until late May. Principal photography will then begin in June and last for approximately nine scheduled weeks, at which point post production will start in August. The film is scheduled to be completed by October 31 (most likely in time for the Tokyo Film Festival in November) with a nationwide theatrical release in Japan following on December 12.

No story line has been decided yet, but a team of three writers, including Hiroshi Kashiwaba (*Godzilla vs. Space Godzilla*), Wataru Mizuma (*Godzilla vs. Mechagodzilla*, *Kamato Takara*) and Masaru Saitani (*Mothra*, *Mothra 2* and *Mothra 3*), are said to be working on the script for *Godzilla Millennium*. Takao Okawara (*Godzilla vs. Mothra*, *Godzilla vs. Mechagodzilla*, *Godzilla vs. Destroyer*) is slated to direct, while *Mothra 3* split director, Kenji Suzuki, will helm the effects. Koichi Kawakita, who retired from the special effects director's chair with *Mothra 2*, has been named as the film's special effects supervisor.

Special thanks to Reuters news service, *Godzilla News* (<http://www.monsters.org>) and Dark Horizons (<http://www.darkhorizons.com>) for the information used in this article.

KAIJU VIDEO BLITZ!

NEW MONSTER MEDIA FOR 1999

The first quarter of 1999 has brought about the largest number of Japanese sci-fi and fantasy film releases on home video in the US since the flurry generated last May by the TriStar Godzilla films. The New Year kicked off with the January 19th release of both *Godzilla vs. Space Godzilla* and *Godzilla vs. Destoroyah* from Columbia/TriStar Home Video. Much to the chagrin of kaija fans everywhere, the long-awaited titles have been unfortunately duplicated in the lower quality Extended Play mode and are pan & scan versions of Toho's widescreen international English-dubbed prints. Both films carry a suggested retail price of \$9.95 each.



Early February saw the release of Dai's Daimeijin film trilogy for the first time ever on home video in the US from A.D.V. Films. *Daimeijin* (1966, released as *Moya* in the US), *Wrath of Daimeijin* (1966, released as *Return of the Giant Gyojin* in the US) and *Return of Daimeijin* (1966, known in Japan as *Daimeijin Gyozaikin*, previously unreleased in the US) feature original Japanese language with English subtitles. The films have been digitally remastered in Standard Play and Hi-Fi stereo, and are presented in original widescreen format. In the future, A.D.V. Films also plans to release the 1994 Toho fantasy film, *Nemato Takara*, on home video in the US under Toho's international title of *Gorecki—The Eight Headed Dragon*. For more information, visit the A.D.V. Films web site at <http://www.advf.com>.

Kaiga Productions, the Japanese sci-fi live action division of animation distributor Media Blasters (also responsible for last year's video release of *Goppo, The Triphibian Monsters*), will release the latest film from director Kenta

Azamiya, *Too No Taku* (1997), as *Moons Over Too—Mokaraga*. (Note: *Mokaraga* is the name of the film's kaija.) Set in the 16th century, the film is the tale of three heroes who must join forces to unravel the secret of a mysterious event during a time when Japan was devastated and ravaged by constant warfare. Every step of the way, they are opposed by Kakugyo, an evil sorcerer who craves power and conquest. *Moons Over Too—Mokaraga* features the ever-popular Yako Maryama (lrs from *Zorran* and *Zorran 2*). Kenta Azamiya is the director of the *Zeinze* series, the *Masked Rider* and *Mechanical Violator* Heikader theatrical features and the upcoming *Mokushu*.



Also available from Media Blasters' Tokyo Shock label is the Japanese supernatural horror film, *Eko Eko Azarak*. *More The Dark Angel* (in actuality, the third film of the *Eko Eko Azarak* trilogy in Japan from Gaga Productions and Tsuburaya Doga). The film involves a 17 year-old witch, Mosa Kera, who has a penchant for standing upon supernatural mysteries—usually at school where evil forces are free to prey upon an unlimited supply of innocent, young victims. The widescreen, original Japanese language, English-subtitled film retails for \$29.95. For more information, visit Media Blasters on the Internet at <http://www.kitty-media.com>.

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GAMERA III

A NEW KAIJU MENACE EMERGES AS FILM PREMIERE DRAWS NEAR



Last issue, we brought you the first report on the upcoming kaiju epic, *Gamera III: The Awakening of Iryu*. This issue, we are finally able to reveal Gamera's latest adversary, Iryu, in a series of exclusive photos that were taken on the special effects set of *GW* last July. The new monster sports a variety of powerful weapons in the film, including an array of spear-tipped tentacles from which its wings unfold, allowing it to fly. The full-size internally-lit Iryu costume, as well as a smaller-scale puppet, assorted body parts and infant form prop, were created for *GW* by Fuyuko Shirada and Takuya Yarnabe of Y-Shop. Special techniques were employed during filming

to enhance the adult Iryu's movements so that its on-screen actions will be quite unlike what audiences have come to expect from a man in a monster suit.

Daiji has launched the official *GW* web site, which includes a preview trailer for the new film, at <http://www.daiji.tokuma.com/GAMERA>. *Gamera III* hits theater screens in Japan on March 13, 1999. Stay tuned for our continuing coverage of the film, including full story synopses and reviews in *Kaiju Fan #11*.



(Above): The awe-raging Iryu costume reveals its appearance before the special effects cameras.

(Left): Mr. Takuya Yarnabe of Y-Shop stands proudly by the impressive kaiju suit that he helped to create.

(Below left): The SPFX staff manipulates the monster's tentacles in an effort to enhance its onscreen movements. (Below): Mr. Yarnabe displays the full-scale infant Iryu prop for the approval of *Kaiju-Fan* readers.

Photos by Jim Chervinski





A technician readjusts the movements of the full-size Hyper Gyaos puppet on the special effects set of *Gemesis II*. Photo by Jim Chonowicki



The gruesome Gamera graveyard miniature set, which was constructed utilizing parts from Michigyo vinyl model kits. Photo courtesy Hi-Magic

KAJIU BRIEFS

Latest Ultraman Big Screen Opus

A new Ultraman feature film from Tsuburaya Productions will be released in Japan on March 6 through the Shochiku theater chain. Aptly (or unimaginatively) titled *Ultraman Tiga & Ultraman Dyna & Ultraman G: Super Time & Space Showdown*, the film will feature the three latest Ultra heroes, as well as several new kaju villains. Additionally, the film's three monsters, Dajin, Satan Hino and Scylla, can combine to become a single super kaju.

New UltraSeven Video Releases

Also on deck from Tsuburaya Productions are six new *UltraSeven* episodes scheduled for direct-to-video release in spring and summer of 1999.

Sentai Series Ready to Go Go

Kyujin Sentai Go Go Five (Ryusei Tani *Force Go Go V*) will premiere on February 21 on TV Asahi in Japan, as the current television series, *Gyagasan*, comes to a close. The new series originally sported the title *Densetsu*, but was subsequently changed. *Go Go Five* is the same name that was originally considered for the 1982 *Super Sentai* series, *Go Sentai Goggle Five*.

Rosetta Reserved For Second Season

Last week, we reported on *Masked Angel Rosetta*, a new heroine heroine series geared toward a decidedly adult fan audience. The first 13-episode season has since run its course and the series has now been renewed for a second season on TV Tokyo. In the planning stages is a line of *Rosetta* tie-in merchandise including action figures and trading cards.



(Above) Poster ad for the new feature film, *Ultraman Tiga & Ultraman Dyna & Ultraman G: Super Time & Space Showdown*.

(Right) Action figure prototypes of the characterless Phasmon and Rosetta from the new TV series *Masked Angel Rosetta*.



KAJIU BOO-BOO

Rich Cohen's fantastic "Godzilla vs. Godzilla" artwork, which was featured on last issue's cover, was inadvertently cropped, cutting off most of the TriStar Godzills. While this may or may not have been a good thing, our sincerest apologies to Rich. The complete, uncropped artwork will be reprinted in a future issue.

Secondly, we omitted crediting Keith Sewell for photographs that were used in the "G-GON '98 Photo Gallery" featured in *Kyaku Fan* #9. Sorry about that, Keith—we owe you one, big "Dab!"

EDITORIAL

WOW, issue #301! I know that's not really something that one should get overly excited about, but there were many times in the last year or so when we actually thought *KayFu* was never going to make it, and that the magazine you are now holding would eventually go the way of the Dodo (or at the very least, the way of *Moribito*, *Japanese Ghosts* and *KayFu Review*). But despite the various problems of this past year, the hard work of several dedicated people (my wife, Carol, and my good friend, Jim, to name but a few), insured that *KayFu* would continue to live on. Back in May of 1995, when I tossed around the idea of a *G-Fan* companion magazine with Guy Tucker, neither one of us could have ever guessed how the future would eventually unfold. Sure, there have been both good times and bad, but here we are, two issues, one lowest, one REALLY BAD *American Godzilla* film and one "Nazi war" film, and *KayFu* has achieved what few fanzines have been able to accomplish. It has survived! And for that, we have both our readers and *KayFu*'s very talented contributors to thank. No magazine, regardless of its content or focus, can survive without support and thankfulness, we have received tons of support over the last year. Thank you, my friends—we can only go up from here.

Speaking of the Nazi war, 1998 saw its fair share of "barage fire" thrown from both the Canadian and New York corners. Unfortunately, while those of us here at DS&P have looked upon this bickering as a kind of competitive fun, there are several individuals who have taken this issue far too seriously. They've expressed the opinion that you have to be on either one side of the argument or the other and that in order for you to enjoy this fanzine, you must be either a "JD supporter," and read only *G-Fan* or be a full-fledged card-carrying member of the "New York G-Mafia" (a term which many people tend to forget was coined in the by JD and not us). These people have expressed (usually hiding behind an alias on the alt newsgroup monster newsgroup) that if you attend G-Con, you should not be attending G-CON (and vice versa) and that one side should "step aside" in favor of the other, so that the fanzine will survive. They speak of having several choices as somehow a bad thing for this hobby. What they fail to understand is that fanzines surviving and flourishing isn't about either one "side" or the other, but about the films and programs that sparked interest in the fanzine to begin with. This is something that I recently pointed out when one individual posting to the Net gloated that NHK's special

on the American *Godzilla* gave very little coverage to G-CON '98, the point that the special was not about G-CON but about *Godzilla* seems to be completely lost on this person.

Another favorite pastime of some people entails stirring up hostility between the respective camps by playing the "he said this or he said that" game. What is really interesting is that many of these comments come from people who consider themselves to be the so-called "experts" in this fandom—people who either refuse to do something for the fans, are incapable of doing something for the fans, or are sometimes just too drunk to do something for the fans. Some of these "experts" have expressed open hostility towards people like Jim Cervantele, JD Lees and myself because by providing the rest of fandom with access to toys, conventions and "meat," we've taken away the "exclusiveness" they wished to hold only for themselves. Realizing that their ranting only strengthens our resolve, these "experts" will then choose a side, allying themselves against the "evil ogotter" with which one or all of them share an enmity and forming a coalition to obliterate the "enemy." The end result is usually a comical and ludicrous attempt to discredit one side of the other. For example, I wish to share with you a letter that we recently received. Readers may notice that it is the exact same letter *G-Fan* printed in issue #304 from a Mr. Ken Koch of Temple, AZ. Everything is the identical in both letters with the exception of "*G-Fan*" having been replaced with "*KayFu*," as the letter that we received and the author's name now being Mr. Nene Ortiz of Pasadena, P.R.

Dear *KayFu* Fan

This is my first time writing you, and I have to start off with a complaint but here it goes. *KayFu* #97 came in the mail one summer time with a note inside saying this was my last issue and to please make my subscription. The number after my address label says 6, however, meaning I have two issues to go. I started my subscription with issue #8, and have renewed it three times. Please check your records

again, as I do not want to miss a single issue, thank you.

Apparently, "Mr. Ortiz" does not fair very well in math. He claims to have "started his subscription with issue #8" and has since "renewed it three times"—no means that, when you consider that we are only up to issue #101. The rest of the letter goes on to be an exact copy of Mr. Koch's letter, praising both JD and Mary Carmine for *The Official Godzilla Compendium*. The letter even goes on to end with, "I love your magazine and hope to eventually go to a *G-Fan* and meet you in person. " Only if they're dragging my rotting corpse through the halls, that is!

Obviously, that letter is a fake and I am sure that the only reason it was sent to both *G-Fan* and us was the hope that we both would post the letter and thus, look like a couple of jerks. Better luck next time!

1998 has been an interesting year for us. The *Tokyo Internet* is online, *KayFu* has now 68 pages, and G-CON has found a new home. 1999 looks to be no different and you can expect us to continually find new ways to improve our magazine and come up with new and interesting guests for G-CON. In addition, we're expanding our web site to include a great many new features. Watch for the online premiere of www.kayfufan.com in 1999!

As we approach the end of the twentieth century, I hope that we can put the problems of the past behind us and look ahead to the future. The announcement of a new *Japanese Godzilla* film will be a seriously boost to this fandom, and 1999 is shaping up to be as exciting as 1994 was. Here's hoping that the new *Godzilla* film is the beginning of something wonderful for this fandom.

John Russo Roberto
Publisher
January 1998, 1999

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Inside this massive, 375-page book, you'll find:

- Information on the making of all 22 Godzilla movies, from *Godzilla* (1954) to *Godzilla vs. Deutoroyah* (1995), by Toho in Japan.
- The full story of TriStar's 1998 big-budget *Godzilla*.
- Nearly 140 photos and illustrations.
- Detailed biographies of *Godzilla*'s creators.
- Synopses and behind-the-scenes information on numerous unmade *Godzilla* movies in Japan and the U.S., including *The Volcano Monsters*, Steve Miner's *Godzilla: King of the Monsters in 3-D*, *Godzilla vs. Frankenstein*, and others.
- Interviews with and profiles of cast members, special-effects crew members and other personalities integral to *Godzilla*'s film career.

ORDERING INFORMATION Japan's Favorite Mon-Star will be available through major bookstores chains in the U.S. and Canada, including Barnes & Noble, Borders and others. It can also be pre-ordered on-line through Amazon (www.amazon.com), Barnes & Noble Online (www.barnesandnoble.com) and Borders Online (www.borders.com). (Note: some online retailers still list the book under its former title, *Godzilla: The Unauthorized Biography*.) The book can also be ordered directly from its U.S. and Canadian distributors; information is available through the ECW Press web site (www.ecwpress.ca).

Cover illustration by Alex Wold

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THE KAUU-FAN CRAZY COVER CONTEST



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 NORMAN ENGLAND (WRITER - FANGORIA, G-FAN)
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 KENRICHIO SATSUMA (GORZILLA SUIT ACTOR, 1985-1995)
 CHRIS SCALF (G-FAN COVER ARTIST)
 KEITH SEWELL (KAUJ-FAN WRITER)
 GERTHUR SMITH (KAUJ-DIRECT)
 ROF SMITH (G-FAN CONVENTION SECURITY)
 WILLIAM STOUT (RENOVED DINOSAUR ARTIST)
 HIKARI TAKEBA (WOODSTOCK)
 NACKO TAKEBA (WOODSTOCK)
 TOMOYUKI TANAKA (TOHO SCI-FI FILM PRODUCER)
 ANKE TRAPPE (JAPANESEATION VIDEO)
 ELI TSUBURAYA (LEGENDARY SPECIAL EFFECTS DIRECTOR)
 YOSHIO TSUCHIDA (FILM STAR - THE HUMAN WPOD)
 GUY WARDNER TUCKER (AUTHOR - AGE OF THE GODS)
 ULTRAMAN (ORIGINAL)
 ULTRAMAN POWERIP
 JOHN WOODARD (KAUJ-FAN COVER ARTIST)

HOW MANY CAN YOU NAME?

In celebration of our 10th issue, we asked *Kaiju-Fan* cover artist John Woodward to paint a Japanese sci-fi styled tribute to The Beatles famous "Sgt. Pepper's" album cover. Little did we know that he would create a truly inspired illustration that features many of the well-known folks in *kaiju* fandom as well—a cover most fitting for a magazine called *Kaiju-Fan*!

Here's where you can get in on the fun, test your knowledge and win some prizes! You've met those folks at the *kaiju* conventions and seen them in the pages of *Kaiju-Fan*. How many of fandom's familiar faces can you name? Simply fill out the entry form below by matching the correct names to the right faces and mail the entry form back to us. The first five entries that we draw at random that have the most correct answers listed will win from the prizes listed below!

(1) GRAND PRIZE

Marmit Baragon figure

*Autographed by Horio Nakajima,
Kengocho Sotomura & Yoshio Tsuchiya*

(1) SECOND PRIZE

Mothra 3 figures

*Including 6" Rainbow Mothra
& Cretaceous King Ghidorah*

(1) FIRST PRIZE

Ultra Hero figures

*Assortment of five
6" vinyl figures*

(2) THIRD PRIZES

One-year subscription to KAIJU-FAN magazine

Contest Rules:

1. Match the faces numbered 1 through 55 with the names listed alphabetically on the opposite page.
2. Write the correct name for each face in the corresponding numbered slot on the entry form below.
3. Fill in your name, address and phone number and mail the entry form to the address listed below.
4. Official entry form or a copy must be submitted. Entries must be received by 4/15/99.
5. Winners will be notified by mail and announced in a future issue of *Kaiju-Fan*.

KAIJU-FAN CRAZY COVER CONTEST Official Entry Form (Please Print Neatly)

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____

ZIP CODE: _____ PHONE: _____

Mail Completed Entry Form to

KAIJU-FAN CONTEST

c/o DAIKAIJU PRODUCTIONS

890 East 14th Street - Suite 4B
Brooklyn, NY 11230 USA

1	_____	31	_____	41	_____
2	_____	32	_____	42	_____
3	_____	33	_____	43	_____
4	_____	34	_____	44	_____
5	_____	35	_____	45	_____
6	_____	36	_____	46	_____
7	_____	37	_____	47	_____
8	_____	38	_____	48	_____
9	_____	39	_____	49	_____
10	_____	40	_____	50	_____
11	_____	41	_____	51	_____
12	_____	42	_____	52	_____
13	_____	43	_____	53	_____
14	_____	44	_____	54	_____
15	_____	45	_____	55	_____
16	_____	46	_____	56	_____
17	_____	47	_____		
18	_____	48	_____		
19	_____	49	_____		
20	_____	50	_____		

You must use official entry form

(Copies acceptable)

Entries must be received by 4/15/99

ULTRAMAN ACE - EPISODE ONE
TAG MEMBERS HAKUTO AND MINAMI
COMBINE TO FORM ULTRAMAN ACE AND
FACE THE ALIEN KAIJU BERUKORON!



ULTRA MAIL

Send Letters To:
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890 East 14th Street, Suite 4B
Brooklyn, NY 11230

Dear Sirs,

I am a big fan and just received issue #9. It was great and contained some good info. Can you please tell me when Toho is planning to bring back Godzilla—the REAL Godzilla?

Are you planning to go bi-monthly or work on a special Toho Godzilla issue? It does sound good if you think about it! Please take the time to respond and give feedback—some "cries don't" Alas, what ever happened to *Kaiju Review*? Thank you for your time and help!

A Fan-4-Life!

Mike Lanzillo
Philadelphia, PA

Thanks for your comments and suggestions, Mike. If you're a fan of Toho's Godzilla and weren't too happy with the way that Hollywood handled Japan's most famous cinematic icon, then you're going to be thrilled about the movie that Toho plans to resurrect the King of Monsters for the next century! Go to the Kaiju News section beginning on page 4 of this issue for all the details. Based on some of Toho's official comments, it is obvious that they weren't entirely pleased with how their "baby" was handled either. But why are you still reading this? Go to page 4 now!

As far as going bi-monthly is concerned, while both Ann and I would love to produce a new issue EVERY month (let alone every other month), we simply lack the time required to insure that each issue of Kaiju-Fan would retain the high standard of quality that it does now. Sure, we could just as easily throw together a magazine full of fluff every other month, but why would you want to read that?

In regards to Kaiju Review, the last issue was published sometime around late 1993. Kaiju Review publisher and editor Dave Reed has stated that if you paid for any issues that you didn't receive, you should contact him by mail. Write to: Kaiju Review, 101 East 54th Street, 5F, New York, NY 10021. End of plug. Thanks for reading! -JRR

Dear John:

Kaiju-Fan #9 was an enormous improvement with an increased page count filled with

a mixed bag of well-balanced articles and not focusing too much on a particular subject. The photo gallery of G-CON '98 and the Ultraman Festival article were great, too. And I'm not forgetting Roy Wain's excellent guide to Karen Rider, guided by the appropriate photos of each Karen Rider, that who's who beginner's guide reminds me of the excellent Ultra Family guide by Lonell Bridges (Oh, Lonell!) back in issue #2. All in all, Kaiju-Fan #9 was indeed a solid issue!

I am one of the many readers who would like Kaiju-Fan to keep the Godzilla coverage to a minimum (unless there is a new Godzilla film coming, that is). Apart from asking you the difficult task of providing more coverage on Ultraman and other tokusatsu TV shows, I would also like to see more artwork from the fans. Already there are some talented, regular contributors submitting their superb artwork, such as John Woodard, Mark Nagata and Rich Cohen (Hi, Richard!). Richard's imaginative work is always impressive, such as his art depicting Fineman versus the Alien Bakon (see issue #8, page 12 -JLJ). Never felt afraid of sending too much of your artwork for Kaiju-Fan—the more the merrier!

Enclosed is my order for the Kaiju-Fan Ultra Special Issue 1998 EX. I'm sorry that I couldn't meet your deadline of October 15 to send in this order; I only received Kaiju-Fan #9 in the mail on October 20. You had mailed out the magazine on October 8 and it normally takes 10 to 15 days for an Air Mail letter sent from the US to reach Malaysia and vice versa. May I suggest that, should there be other exclusive offers or even a contest for Kaiju-Fan readers in the future, the closing date should be extended to a reasonable period for the benefit of overseas readers. Although I have missed the October 15 deadline, I hope that I won't be left out in owning a copy of this special issue.

Thank you, John and all the faithful contributors in Kaiju and Ultra Land for keeping Kaiju-Fan alive! Keep up the good work!

Best regards,

Soo Lee Min
Sabik, Malaysia

As always, Soo Lee, it's a pleasure to hear from you! Sorry about the slight pause caused by our October 15th "deadline" for the Kaiju-Fan Ultra Special Issue 1998 EX. We had originally planned to have Kaiju-Fan #9 out by the beginning of September and we only wanted to get a feel for how many people are interested in ordering the special issue, since it is not part of the regular subscription. At

the beginning of August, however, we decided to expand the page count of the regular issues, leaving us with 14 new pages to fill. So unfortunately, issue #9 went to press later than expected. I am happy to report, however, that response to the special issue offer has been overwhelming and that it will be going to press in late January. While the 1998 special issue was originally planned for November, this delay has given us the time needed to keep the issue that you are now reading (RM) on schedule, which is especially important now that Kaiju-Fan has been picked up by a distributor. (This delay also allowed Ann a slight break between formatting the respective issues in order to get some sleep...JLJ)

As far as any concerns over too much Godzilla coverage, I personally do not feel that Godzilla has been covered all that much in the pages of Kaiju-Fan. With the exception of Tristar film news and reviews, we haven't had a Godzilla article since "Godzilla and the Second World War" back in issue #3 and the Godzilla and Godzilla Roids Again coverage in "Toho In America" which appeared in issues #5 and #6 respectively. Keep in mind that while we don't want Kaiju-Fan to be particularly Godzilla-centered, a majority of the submissions that we receive are on Toho's sci-fi films. In addition, while I'm a huge fan of the television productions, I personally do not feel confident enough in my knowledge of the material to pen any articles on Ultraman, Karen Rider, etc. Thankfully, we have talented people like Keith Sewell, Roy Wain, Lonell Bridges and Kevin Gray to share their knowledge of the television genre, while Brian Cabrer, Robert Shonds and myself stick to the films. I'm sure that you will enjoy the special issue as our way of infusing more small screen productions into the magazine as we continue to do our best to insure that each and every issue of Kaiju-Fan has a balance of articles. And don't yell at us too loudly if we drop the ball now and then. Take care. -JRR

Dear Kaiju-Fan

Your article on Karen Rider was very good, it had such interesting facts about the TV shows. I have collected some of the episodes from all the shows, as well as the specials and movies. Whenever the Riders get together, it's like Doctor Who (my favorite Time Lord) meeting his past selves!

Mike Carron
Calver City, CA

P.S. I think Tristar's Godzilla is okay. I'd like to see Tristar do a new Ultraman movie, if possible.

I am happy that you enjoyed Roy's article.

as he is one of the fandom's most prolific writers. While some may think of Kaiju-Fan as either a G-Fan clone or a magazine that covers only Godzilla, we are constantly striving to cover as much of Japanese sci-fi and fantasy genre as possible. While we still have a long way to go before we can ever hope of reaching that goal, we feel that Kaiju-Fan is moving in the right direction and promise that future issues will only get better. -JRR

Dear Sirs:

Yes! Please continue my subscription to Kaiju-Fan. I don't want to miss a single issue. I like G-Fan, but I like your magazine better because it covers other material! Much as I love Godzilla and friends, I also love Ultraman and all those other Japanese heroes and programs. You cover it all, so Kaiju-Fan is an excellent source for all Japanese fantasy, etc. Keep up the good work!

Thank you,

Paul Lenzell
Newbury, OH

Thanks for the very kind words, Paul. Kaiju-Fan was started with the idea that G-Fan was missing out on an entire world of Japanese science-fiction and fantasy. And while we might have looked at ourselves as G-Fan's sister magazine, I am sure you will agree that "little sister" has truly grown up and moved out of the house! Besides, learning about different areas of Japanese science-fiction is informative and fun. I remember how I felt when I first re-discovered Godzilla in the early 90s and spent several enjoyable weekends reacquainting myself with all the classic films that I'd grown up with. Had I left it at that, I would have been cheating myself as I feel many of the fans who won't even consider other programs besides Godzilla are currently doing. Imagine the thrill of discovering Ultraman or Space Giants for the very first time—a reason why we are committed to covering as much of the genre as we possibly can. -JRR

Dear Sir or Madam:

Greetings! I heard of your magazine, Kaiju-Fan, from Aaron J. Smith's Japanese Monster e-mailing updates, that it is distributed seasonally (or four times

a year) and costs \$14 for a yearly subscription. If these figures are inaccurate or have changed, please write back to inform me.

I would also like to know if I would be able to purchase back issues of Kaiju-Fan that I may have missed and which ones, if any, are available. Like to many others out there, I am a true fan of Japanese kaiju, namely Godzilla, of course. I am relieved to see that there are so many wonderful organizations in the United States keeping kaiju fandom alive! Thank you for your time and effort with everything kaiju!

Sincerely,

Cory Brunson
Richlands, VA

Thank you, Cory, for your support of genre publications like Kaiju-Fan. The yearly subscription rate is now \$16.00, but we've just increased our page count to 68 pages, which

also includes full color on the front and back covers, inside and out. We have considered color for the inside pages of Kaiju-Fan, too, but we feel that the newspaper stock currently being used does not lend itself to reproducing color very well. Back issues, while they last, can be ordered using The G-Store order form found on the last page of this issue. -JRR

Dear Sir:

I recently went to my local comic book store to buy a copy of the latest issue of Kaiju-Fan and got a shock. The owner said that it was no longer being issued. Please tell me this is not so. Please let me know if this is the truth or just a cruel joke.

Thank you,

Steven Cable
Moravia, PA

John Hunt



ULTRAMAN - EPISODE THIRTY SEVEN
THE FEROCIOUS PYGMAN WRINGS THE SCIENCE
PATROL THAT THE EVIL MONSTER GORGOMAN
PLANS TO REVIVE SIXTY MONSTERS AND
DESTROY ULTRAMAN!



Steven, what you have experienced is not a cruel joke, but simply a case of misinformation caused by what we call "Diamond Dependency Syndrome" (DDS for short). DDS sometimes occurs because once Diamond Distributors gained a monopoly on distributing comics and magazines to specialty shops, the owners of these shops became content to order only the titles that Diamond carries. Hence, if they don't see a magazine or comic in Diamond's monthly Previews catalog, it simply occurs to them, regardless of their customers' actual needs, that their customers are asking for it or not.

Obviously to everyone reading this now, Kaja-Fan does exist and through the support

of fans like yourself, the magazine keeps getting bigger and better. If you'd like to see Kaja-Fan in your local comic shop, please make the shop's owner aware that it can be ordered directly from Daijisha Publishing at a much better discount off the cover price than Diamond offers on any of their products. Have your local comic shop call us at (715) 233-8649 for all the details.

And if you don't want to miss a single issue of Kaja-Fan, you can always subscribe! -JRR

Dear Kaja-Fan

Thank you for a wonderful fanzine! I

know it's something you guys are bearing over and over, but if you're good and know it, why hide it? I enjoy the weaknesses of "Toho In America" and get a kick out of learning what was done to the original films when brought over to America. Personally, I prefer the original movie, without it being altered—as long as it's subtitled, of course.

There are probably quite a few fans out there who rushed to the TriStar Godzilla film and were disappointed. I wasn't. Actually, it was how I had expected it to come out: cool effects and a so-so story. That's how it goes—everything less in the (special) effects nowadays. Though I enjoyed it, plot discrepancies be damned!

Anyway, to the point at hand (other than saying how much I like your 'zine). I would like to ask, if it is at all possible, for you to cover some of the Heistish Hero shows of the past few years in future issues. Gafford instantly caught my attention when his picture first appeared in *Ultra-Fan* #2. The plot coverage also had me riveted and I would like to know more about the series. I would like to see it myself, but not knowing a word of Japanese doesn't help. Even with *Ultraman Tiga* and *Ultraman Dyna*—I've heard about and seen pictures of both heroes and want to know more about them, possibly an episode guide or something. I know *Godzilla* is a big thing, but even the green titan gets dull after awhile. I'm not putting *Godzilla* down, really. I have all but one movie!

Well, good luck to you and your fanzine and I look forward to more good, informative issues in the future.

Stephen DiFrancesco
Ontario, CA

Thank you, Stephen, and I'm glad that you're enjoying Kaja-Fan. We're excited to learn that there are many fans such as yourself who constantly want to increase their knowledge and enjoyment of the genre of Japanese sci-fi. You're representative of the type of readership that Kaja-Fan is always trying to attract (the fans who want to be informed as well as entertained). Rest assured, we take seriously what goes into every issue instead of just slapping on a pretty cover (although the artwork is important, too).

In regards to coverage of the more recent Japanese heroes, the Kaja-Fan 1998 special issue will feature an extensive *Ultraman Tiga* episode guide and that's just the beginning. You can order the special issue on page 65. Thanks for your support! -JRR

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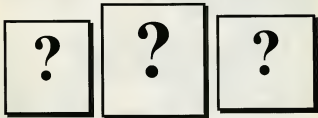
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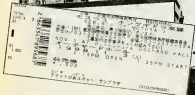


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MOTHRA 3 KING GHIDORAH ATTACKS

at the 1998 TOKYO INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL

by Michael Temple

The Festival

The 1998 Tokyo International Film Festival was held on October 31 through November 11 at the Shibuya Hankoan. For many attendees, the main attraction at the festival were the Japanese premieres of big budget Hollywood blockbusters like *Armageddon*, *Meet Joe Black* and *Six Days, Seven Nights*, all of which were sold out in advance. For the anime fans, however, it was a chance to see the premiere of Toho's latest kyuuga, *Mothra 3*, more than one month before the film would see regular theatrical release in Japan.

Mothra 3: King Ghidorah Strikes (*Mothra 3: King Ghidorah Attacks*) was scheduled for one screening only, on November 3 at the Hankoan's Orchard Hall. We arrived at the venue and waited on line with the large crowd that had also come to see the film, which was mostly composed of adult anime and families with small children. At approximately one half-hour before the film began, the film's actors, director and special effects director appeared on stage to field questions from the press. The cast and staff,

some of whom had worked on all three *Mothra* feature films, spoke of their experiences on the new movie, as well as saluted over the long time entry in the series. Toho's new special effects director, Kengo Sasaki, who assumed the director's chair after Koichi Kawakita retired from the position with the completion of *Mothra 2* (1997), spoke of his apprehensions with this being his first film as special effects "chief". Sasaki stated that one of his main goals was to "give the (film's) monsters life." While all the questions and answers were initially spoken in Japanese, everything was translated into perfect English by one of the best on-stage translators that I have ever seen.

The theater that housed the screening was huge, with an estimated seating capacity of approximately 2,500. For *Mothra 3*, the theater was approximately two-thirds full, whereas the same venue was sold out when *Mothra 2* was shown at the festival in 1997. The presentation of the film was state-of-the-art featuring Dolby digital sound and the print was subtitled in English. The audience seating was poorly rendered in white letters, making it a bit difficult to read at times and the translation was somewhat garbled and not detailed like the dialogue. The film was

screened under Toho's official international title, *Rebirth of Mothra 3*. After the movie had ended, the audience gave a wild round of applause.

The Toho brass assembled outside to greet the press and V.I.P.s as they were leaving the theater. Present among them was producer Shogo Tomiyama. On our way out, we ran into Rya Harauchi, the satsuma actor who had played King Ghidorah, Bunta, Baby Godzilla and Godzilla Junior among other Bunta Godzilla series kyuuga; he also played the new King Ghidorah in *Mothra 3*. Also in attendance was Genta's series special effects director Shoji Higuchi.

The Story

"Have Hope As Long As You Live"

The film opens on Infant Land with the Allen sisters, Moll and Lora (Megumi Kobayashi and Misato Tate), discovering three magical seeds in a cave. The seeds contain the three magic jewels which form the Allen Triangle that protects all Allen. Belera (Aki Hana) appears and manages to steal one of the seeds, but is thwarted by her two sisters. Before she leaves, she announces that "the king of terror is coming." Meanwhile, a meteor falls towards Earth from space.

Next, we are introduced to the Sonoda family, a typical Japanese family with three children, Shota, Shuhei and Tamiako (Takahara Yoshitaka, Kyoko Shirotsuki and Ayumi Suzuki). Shota, the eldest child, is an unhappy and distant boy who doesn't feel he fits in and frequently skips school to spend his time alone in the nearby Aoki forest. The children watch the meteor as it crash-lands in the forest.

The following day, the children leave for school, except for Shota who rides off on his bike to the trip where the meteor had landed. Suddenly, King Ghidorah appears flying over the city and abducting the children at school, including Shuhei and Tamiako. The children demonstrate when Ghidorah projects a bright light ray from above and are transported into a one-dome near Hibokusa where the meteor had fallen. Shota avoids being captured because he was not at school.

Soon, Moll and Lora appear on the scene



(Above) Our magical reporter and friends amidst the crowd that waits in anticipation of the premiere of *Mothra 3*. (Opposite page) The Shibuya Hankoan (bottom right), home of the 1998 Tokyo International Film Festival, along with festival tickets and poster art from *Mothra 3*.

Written by Michael Temple

and conclude that King Ghidorah killed the dinosaur population 130 million years ago, now to has returned in modern time to kill Earth's children for the purpose of stealing their collective life-force for energy. The Alphas decide call on Mothra for help.

Rainbow Mothra arrives and engages King Ghidorah, but it is no match for the powerful three-headed monster. Ghidorah traps the giant moth, who is severely beaten in the battle. Lora looks at Ghidorah and becomes possessed by the monster. She attacks Moll who fights her and their struggle ends with Lora falling into the dome. Inside, the abducted children awaken, confused and scared.

Shota approaches the dome but is attacked by tentacles which spread from it. Belvera and her mechanical flying dragon, Gulgara II, are also attacked by the tentacles and are imprisoned in the dome with the others. Before Shota can be pulled into the dome as well, Furry Mothra appears and blasts the tentacles away, saving the boy. Moll finds Shota, who explains that his brother and sister have been abducted and are trapped in the dome. Moll befriends Shota and the two devise a plan to free the children and Lora.

Inside the dome, the possessed Lora finds Belvera and the two fight. Lora is the victor and sent Belvera to a broken-down Gulgara II.

Moll realizes that the only way to beat King Ghidorah in the present is for Mothra return to the prehistoric era and fight the monster's younger, less powerful predecessor. Once Mothra travels back in time, however, it will not be able to return. Moll grows up her own power to send Mothra back.

130,000,000 years ago to the Cretaceous Period. Mothra transforms, entering Time Slip mode and blasts into the past. In giving her power to Mothra, Moll's body becomes crystallized. She gives her sword to Shota and tells him to go after Lora. With that, Shota attacks King Ghidorah's attention and is sucked into the dome, as well.

Arriving in the Cretaceous period, Mothra discovers the young form of King Ghidorah as it feeds upon the smaller dinosaurs. Ghidorah attacks,



Mothra time travels back to the Cretaceous Period to battle the young King Ghidorah in hopes of erasing the existence of the three-headed monster's modern-day ancestor.

firing plasma fire balls at Mothra in a cruel battle. Mothra manages to cut off one end of Ghidorah's forked tail and the piece falls to Earth. The monster's plasma blasts get the better of Mothra, however, and the giant garden is burned badly.

In 1999, the modern-day King Ghidorah feels the side effects of the battle taking place in the prehistoric era. It becomes enraged and prepares to attack the dome. Inside the dome, Shota finds Lora and is able to break King Ghidorah's hold over her by telling her of Moll's fate. Lora sings a song that helps to restore Mothra in the prehistoric age. Belvera gathers all three presidents of the Alpha Triangle, the presidents representing each of the Alphas—wisdom for Moll, love for Lora and courage for Belvera—and the three swords merge into one.

Back in the prehistoric age, Mothra is able to defeat the younger Ghidorah by dumping the beast into a volcano. In the present, King Ghidorah and the dome disappear, releasing

all of the children. Mothra has been badly beaten, however, and lands on the ground in the dinosaur era to recover. Suddenly, a trio of prehistoric Mothra larvae appear and begin to spin a cocoon over the fallen giant.

In the present time, Shota's parents are reunited with their three children. Suddenly, the piece of Ghidorah's tail that was blown off in the Cretaceous Period reappears and King Ghidorah appears again in 1999, now sporting a golden sheen. As everyone attempts to flee from the attacking monster, a huge cocoon breaks out of the side of the mountain.

From within appears Armored Mothra, the cocoon had served as a time capsule, allowing Mothra to return to the present. Armored Mothra sprouts wings and takes to the air.

Mothra and King Ghidorah battle once again and this time, the giant moth is the more formidable opponent. Mothra runs Ghidorah mad-as, knocking the space dragon from the sky and succeeds in slowing off one of Ghidorah's wings with its own razor-sharp wings. Mothra delivers the final blow, blasting straight through Ghidorah who crystallizes and explodes in the sky.

Mothra reverts to a final form, retires the armor plating and Belvera and Lora use the magical sword to revive Moll. Belvera leaves, acknowledging that although she thinks differently than her Alpha sisters, she is no longer at odds with them. Shota, having helped to save the day, is no longer distant and unhappy.

The Review

Overall, *Mothra J* is what we've come to expect from Toho in recent years: the script is weak and predictable, the entire cast is a mere seven actors with children comprising central characters; a majority of the action takes place away from any major city locale due to budget restraints. The inclusion of King Ghidorah is a means to breathe life into the series is too little, too late, considering that this film is the pure, and formulaic, devoid of any new ideas. Basically, *Mothra J* works as



The super-powerful King Ghidorah easily defeats Rainbow Mothra when the two monsters initially clash in the year 1999.

mindless entertainment and not much else (although I did find it to be more enjoyable than TriStar's *Godzilla*).

The special effects are average, but nothing extraordinary. Overall, the monsters are well designed, with Rainbow Mothra having been improved beyond its usual "stuffed toy" look. The new Ghidorah is very impressive in both its past and present forms. The film does feature some decent city destruction scenes,

although they are relegated to one short segment that takes place early in the film. The dinosaurs in the Cretaceous Period sequence were accomplished with small motorized puppets and appear so much on screen, these effects are among the worst in the history of Toho's kaiju saga. The CGI effects are experimental in nature and more are particularly impressive.

While some will claim that *Mothra 3* is made for children, I should point out that most

Japanese sci-fi television programs geared towards children exhibit more imagination than this film. Considering that the same production team behind *Mothra 3* is also handling the upcoming *Godzilla Millennium*, I don't have particularly high hopes for that movie. Until Toho injects some fresh ideas and creativity into their productions, clichéd fantasy films like *Mothra 3* are the best that we can hope for.



(Above): Where's the paperman when you need him? (Below): Hanging out with King Ghidorah! From left: Shigeko Nijima, kaju substitution actor Koji Yulkishiro, Michael Temple and August Ragone. Photo by Michael Temple



(Above): Aki Hano, who stars as Belvera in *Mothra 3*, waits for the screening followed by newcomer Misato Tate who stars as Lora. Photo by Michael Temple



(Above): Fearful editor August Ragone meets Gamera series special effects director Shinji Higuchi (right) after the screening. Higuchi's smile seems to say, "I've got nothing to worry about!" Photo by Michael Temple

Mothra 3: King Ghidorah Raishuu (Rebirth of Mothra 3)

1998 / 99 min. / Color

STAFF

Producer.....Shogo Tomiyama
Director.....Okhiro Yoneda
Special Effects Director.....Kenji Suzuki
Screenplay.....Masumi Suetani
Music.....Toshiyuki Watanabe
Director of Photography.....Yoshinori Sekiguchi
Film Editor.....Nobuo Ogawa
Sound Recording.....Teichi Saito
Lighting.....Tsuyoshi Awakiba
Art Direction.....Akira Sakuragi, Tetsuzo Osawa

CAST

Mai.....Megumi Kobayashi
Lora.....Misato Tate
Belvera.....Aki Hano
Yusuke Sonoda.....Abushi Onita
Sachie Sonoda.....Miyuki Matsuda
Shota Sonoda.....Takuma Yoshizawa
Shuhei Sonoda.....Kyohji Shimozaki
Tamako Sonoda.....Ayano Suzuki
Principal Kyoto.....Koichi Ueda

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OR
ASTRO-MAN?**

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WITH
STEREOPHONIC SOUND

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WOMAN...
YET,
HALF MAN -
HALF BEAST**



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Presentation
Produced by Toho



TOHO IN AMERICA

A Critical Comparison Between the Japanese and American Versions of Toho's Science Fiction & Fantasy Films

PART VI: THE HUMAN VAPOR

THE LAST WAR

Gas Ningen Daichigo
(*The First Human Vapor*)

Released December 11, 1967

Maximum Temperature: 40°C and 1 minute

The Human Factor

Released May 30, 1964

by Andrew Ross

Running Time: 31 minutes

Formerly available from
Prism Video, Video Games,
Congress Video & Video Warehouse

**Analysis by Robert Biondi
with Tim Ciencella**

Toho's first special effects film for 1960 was an entry from their low-budget "monster" series, *Demon Mages* (The Electrically-Transmuted Men, 1960 US title *The Secret of the Telepath*, release date unknown). See *Kayjo-Fun* #6) Despite disappearing returns for *The Electrically-Transmuted Men*, however, Toho made a second foray into the mutant series in the close of 1960. *Ga Mungo Densetsu* (The First Human Paper) was Toho's fifth entry in this sub-genre, preceded by *Human Mages* (The Invisible Men, aka *The Invisible Stranger*, 1954, re-released in the US), *Agon Yokotoku* (The Abominable Snowman, 1955 US title *Wolf Man*, 1958. See *Kayjo-Fun* #5), *Byu to Eikon Mungo* (Beauty and the Evil People US title *The H-Man*, 1959. See *Kayjo-Fun* #7) and *The Electrically-Transmuted Men*.

Written by Takashi Katsura and directed by Ichiro Honda (by this time, two regulars in Toho's SPFX series), *The First Massacre* is the most unique of the "restraint" films up to this point. Like the previous three films (including *The Abominable Snowman*), *The First Massacre* vapor deals with a restraint plot woven into a horror drama, yet the title character is very different from the restraints seen in the prior films. The Vapor Man is not a characterless, motiveless jelly as in *Seonai* and the *Liquid People*, nor a cold, emotion-

killer as in *The Electrically Transmuted Man*. The Vapor Man is instead portrayed as a sympathetic character—a pilot named Mirano who, “because of a few shadows on an x-ray,” was forced to give up his dream of reaching

the stars and accepts a job as a librarian. A mad scientist named Dr. Sawa (Faydū Murakami) experiments on Mizuno and accidentally gives the librarian the power to transform into vapor at will. After killing Dr. Sawa, the Vapor Man





Actors Kaori Yachigusa (left) and Yoshio Tsuchiya bring poetic sadness to the tragic love story of *The Human Vapor*, demonstrating that love doesn't come easy at a Toho sci-fi film.

goes on a crime spree, although he does not rob banks for his own gain, but rather for the woman he loves—a dancer named Fujichiro Kamega (Kaori Yachigusa) whom he met in a senior high school. The story of their love and of its tragic consequences is something akin to *The Phantom of the Opera* and it is this poetic factor that sets *The Human Vapor* apart from Toho's prior mature movies. Yoshio Tsuchiya, who had played supporting parts as a detective in the two mature films immediately preceding *The First Human Vapor*, essays the role of Mizuno. This was Tsuchiya's first major role in a special effects movie and his intense performance lends much to the character of the Vapor Man.

In 1962, *The First Human Vapor* was obtained by Brenco Pictures, along with *Sakai Danzawa (The Great World War)*, 1961) and *Kazuo Goro (Gorath, the Myrmidon Star)*, 1962. Brenco renamed these three films as *The Human Vapor*, *The Last War* and *Gorath*, respectively. A small company, Brenco struggled for nearly two years in Americanizing their Toho acquisitions. In 1964, Brenco released *Gorath* and *The Human Vapor* on May 15 and May 20 respectively. *The Last War* (also covered in this installment of "Toho in America") apparently bypassed a theatrical release and went straight to television in the mid-1960s. Incidentally, this was a busy period for American-released Toho special effects films. Universal released *King Kong vs. Godzilla* (1962) in 1963, and in September of 1964, American International released *Godzilla vs. The Thing (Mothra no Gajira)*, 1964), known today as *Godzilla vs. Mothra*.

Gorath and *The Human Vapor* were appar-

ently released separately and were perhaps later paired on a double-bill, as *Fantasy* review notes that the two films were packaged together. Unfortunately, *Gorath* and *The Human Vapor* were only screened in a limited number of theaters in certain regions of the US. In 1968, Brenco re-released *Gorath* and *The Human Vapor*, but with scant success. The following year, Brenco went out of business, although these two films and *The Last War* continued to run on local television stations throughout the 1970s and beyond.

The two main instances in which *The Human Vapor* differs from the original Japanese film is that the character of Mizuno narrates the movie and his ability to transform into vapor is revealed at the outset of the film. In order to accomplish this, the reworking of the original film, along with many other incidental changes, is fairly extensive. Since space does not allow for all these alterations to be covered, only the most significant will be noted. As usual with "Toho in America," scenes unique to the Japanese version will be denoted by **bold text**.

The opening and closing credits of *The Human Vapor* were completely changed. The Japanese version opens with the **Toho Scope** version of their famous logo and is followed by a **two-minute credit sequence** beginning with a vapor cloud dissipating (actually footage of expanding vapor played in reverse) to reveal the film's title underneath it. **Immediately following, the remainder of the credits is shown over footage of a bank robbery in progress.** The American version scrapped this entire sequence (save for a portion of the robbery which will be discussed

later) and replaced it with the title, "The Human Vapor," superimposed over a mist background, apparently the same as that of the Japanese version's credit sequence. "© MCMXLII BRENCO PICTURES" appears below the credits, reflecting the year (1962) that Brenco purchased the rights to this film.

In the Japanese version, Honda gradually reveals Mizuno's character, who is not seen until 25 minutes into the film. At this point, he is at work in the library with nothing to give us a clue that he is far more than he appears. 38 minutes into the film, Mizuno confesses to the press that he is the bank robber. 41 minutes into the movie (at nearly the mid-point), Mizuno reveals his identity as the Vapor Man. The opening 10 minutes of the American version, which has Mizuno meeting with members of the press, in actuality takes place 52 minutes into the Japanese version. This sequence includes Mizuno recalling via flashback how Dr. Sano (who has a sign outside of his laboratory written in German—possibly a joke equating Sano with Dr. Frankenstein, another mad scientist who was destroyed by his own monster) transformed him into the Vapor Man. After these 10 minutes, Honda's version begins and the action basically stays on the same narrative track as in the original Japanese film. However, this causes the scenes leading up to the point where the press meeting occurs to become a continuation of the flashback until the story catches up with "the present."

The American version's manufactured flashback is appropriately narrated by the Mizuno character. The Japanese version, as with Honda's other movies, uses a linear narrative, leaving room for interpretation. Unlike Warner Bros' disastrous treatment of *Gojira no Gokushu (Godzilla's Counterattack)*, 1955, US title *Godzilla the Fire Monster*, 1959, aka *Godzilla Roars Again*. See *Kay-Pix* #6), the narration in *The Human Vapor* works very well, with such lines as "...that bottomless pit to which I had fallen (the library). I, who was born to touch the stars, condemned to this purgatory... and the stars forever beyond my reach." "I sensed here (Dr. Sano) as a torner would grab a rat," and "I was not only alive, I was beyond death!" Particularly haunting are Mizuno's final lines in the movie: "I, who can never die, have now lost my reason for living (Fujichiro). I am condemned to go on through all eternity, to wander... and remember." Without explanation, the American version "flashback" incorporates several scenes during which Mizuno isn't present and his narration is heard in two places after the flashback, as well.

The first notable piece of scene-shuffling occurs when Mizuno robs a bank, presented

the laboratory scenes as an extension of the flashback. In the Japanese version, the scene initially plays out like an ordinary crime drama, though we cannot see the identity of the robbers; we can only see that he is on a gray business suit. It soon becomes apparent that something is amiss when a bank vault door is shown opening by itself. With this scene, Honda has clued us that the movie is not as it appears. In the American version, shots of Mizuno stepping through bars as he turns into vapor (placed immediately before the shot of the vault door opening by itself) and awkwardly picking up a stack of yen bills were awkwardly spliced into the robbery scene. This spliced footage was lifted from scenes that appear much later in Honda's version, respectively when Mizuno attempts to free Fujichiro from jail and when he demonstrates his powers for the police in a bank vault.

Interestingly enough, the American version contains numerous sequences of footage not found in the Japanese version, footage which for the most part defies identification. Bridging the first bank robbery with subsequent footage of Mizuno driving a stolen car while being tailed by Detective Okamoto (Tatsuya Mihashi) is a patrol car in an extended sequence of such added footage. Its depictions include a crowd gathering around a man lying on the street, the mode of a police station, the police mobilizing and several shots of blue cars (representing Mizuno's despite changing make/model between shots and not matching the blue car actually in the film) driving through the streets. The footage is accompanied by Mizuno's narration describing his pursuit by the police. Of all the unidentified footage found in the film, some of this sequence clearly appears to be from a Japanese production of the same (or possibly earlier) vintage as *The Human Vapor*: A likely explanation is that it came from another Toho film (or perhaps more than one) that Hiroasa was forced to purchase along with the three sci-fi features and this latter work was either shelved as a write-off or released quickly to television and/or foreign markets.

Some banter between the female reporter, Kyoko (Kikuko Satō), and another reporter played by Kuno Nomura, the blond lead from *Dashogan Paron* (*Ghost Hunter Paron*, 1958; US title: *Paron the Unbelievable*, 1962; See *Kaga-Fan* #7) was transposed from the American version.

When Okamoto and Kyoko trail Fujichiro from her home, scenes of the Japanese countryside (again from an unidentified source) are spliced in. It is possible that this was done to lengthen the dialogue between the two characters as they "shadow" Fujichiro.

After escaping from the police's attempts to ambush him at the press meeting, Mizuno escapes through a window and is seen in vapor form floating upward from the outside of the building. This is followed by an extended sequence of shots showing a helicopter flying over Tokyo in pursuit, accompanied by Mizuno's post-flashback narration in which he describes his demented toying with the police helicopter: "That time, I led them over Tokyo. A vapor man can dissolve and ride the wind while they look helplessly at the sky. I rode with the pilot—witness, of course—helping him search for me until I grew tired of it. I find I see of everything besides except Fujichiro, my one link with Earth." This footage is taken from *Gowshi* during the scene wherein the DX-2 crew performs a manual number while flying a hijacked helicopter to confront the Minister of Space about his decision to scrub their mission and is not found in the American version of the film. The initial shot of this sequence—an aerial view mirroring away from a building (ironically, the last shot from *Gowshi*'s helicopter scene)—is actually a PGV shot of a helicopter heading towards the building which has been played in reverse; this shot doesn't quite match the building exterior as seen during the aforementioned escape sequence.

At Fujichiro's home, her guardian, Aya (Bokuzen Hatan), tries to tell her mistress that a storm is coming. Suddenly, Mizuno enters the house, his form framed by a flash of lightning and a roll of thunder. This is an effective shot that should not have been removed by Hiroasa. In addition, this deletion gives the false impression that Mizuno was already in the room before Aya left.

Fujichiro's secret at the climax was considerably muddled and redrafted. Most notable is the revelation that the Vapor Man sabotaged the electrical device designed to destroy him in the theater. In the Japanese version, this plot development is revealed before Mizuno and Fujichiro embrace, while in the American version, this has been altered to occur after they embrace.

After the authorities attempt to destroy Mizuno by blowing up the theater, Detective Okamoto (Tatsuya Mihashi), Kyoko and the police and scientists watch as Mizuno (in vapor form) drags the broken, charred corpse of Fujichiro outside of the blazing theater. Kyoko reacts with horror and weeps uncontrollably as Okamoto's shoulder. It is regrettable that this truly affecting shot was removed from Hiroasa's version.



The shuffling of scenes in the American version of *The Human Vapor* diminishes the impact of the original film's dramatic revelation that Mizuno is the Vapor Man.

After the tragic climax, "The End" (in the same form as the opening title) appears in lieu of the Japanese character for "Owarai" (The End) from the Japanese version. This is followed by a shot of mist, taken from the Japanese version's title sequence. Then, in a pleasant surprise, a narrator (the same voice that dubbed Mizuno) recaps the main characters, accompanied by footage from earlier scenes in the film. The narrator intones, "Kaiko Sata as the Reporter, Tatsuya Mitsuoka as the Detective, Kaoru Yushigasa as the Dancer and Yoshio Tsuchiya as the Librarian." Credits are then displayed for the main crew, superimposed over the Japanese title mist. On close inspection, the running time of the vapor background was extended by repeating the shot of the mist over the title multiple times, as a result, the mist can be seen dissipating just enough to glimpse the Japanese characters for *Gai Nagan Danichigo* every few seconds. The recapping of the main characters is a nice touch and is unique in an Americanized *Kajya* film. It helps to lead the viewer out of the tragic and haunting story that they have just seen and is a reminder that, after all, it's only a movie.

Along with these alterations to the visuals, Kurio Miyasaka's score was entirely replaced by American film library music. Some of the cues have a distinctly "Asian" sounding tone, which American audiences might expect to hear in a Japanese movie. Regarding another music substitution, Guy Tucker reports in *Age of the Gods* that, upon first viewing the American version, Yoshio Tsuchiya "was dumbfounded that the Americans replaced the Noh dance music (heard during Fujichyo's performances) ... with upmarket traditional comedic dance music." Though the loss of Miyasaka's ominous theme for the Vapor Man and the tragic-sounding love theme is regrettable, the substituted music adequately carries the action. Years later, American audiences were unknowingly treated to some of Miyasaka's *The Human Vapor* score, borrowed by Taishuya Productions when the Ultravision television series was broadcast in the US. The music appears in episode #10, *Nao no Karyu Kichi* (The Mystery of Demons' Base), coincidentally the same episode that features a redesigned Godzilla as the monster, Aras (renamed Keyra in the US dubbing). Miyasaka was the

music composer for this production, as well.

It is difficult to make a final assessment of Brenco's *The Human Vapor*. Though much of the deleted footage mentioned above does not adversely affect the plot, the shuffling of footage throughout the film (especially when Mizuno is shown robbing a bank and attacking a guard and again, during the character build-up at the theater) gives the film a choppy pace. With the exception of the helicopter search,

The revelation of Mizuno's identity at the beginning of *The Human Vapor* is a double-edged sword. On the plot side, the film goes straight to the heart of the story, discarding the "whodunnit" plot that takes up the first third of Honda's version. Like 1956's *Godzilla, King of the Monsters!* (Embassy's Americanized version of 1954's *Gojira*), Brenco has taken the same story and told it from a different perspective—from that of Mizuno. The shuffling of Mizuno's identity from the latter part

of the film to the beginning was probably done to hold audience interest and can be considered a wise decision. On the negative side, the immediate revelation of Mizuno's identity negates what is the most effective scene in the film and one that Honda had set up meticulously. This is when Mizuno demonstrates his extraordinary power in front of a group of detectives in the bank vault. In the Japanese version, this is the first time that Mizuno is shown transforming into vapor and the result is startling. In the American version, the aspect of this scene is ruined because the "creation" scene of the Vapor Man, as well as two scenes of Mizuno turning into vapor, have been rearranged to appear within the first 10 minutes of the film. The early revelation of Mizuno's power also renders moot many of Honda's clever plot twists, such as the suspicious-looking (and comical) character that Okamoto notices in the library and the arrest of a boastful, wannabe bank robber (Ran Yamamoto).



Decades before Hollywood's CGI and special make-up effects wizards would reign supreme, Eiji Tezuka pioneered his own brand of movie magic in Toho science-fiction films like *The Human Vapor*.

which provided a good excuse for some effective narration, the inclusion of external footage from another, unidentified movie (or movies) adds nothing to the story and further impairs the look of the film. A worse example is when special effects footage is repeated, such as when Mizuno is shown on his crime spree in the early part of the film, this repetition of footage gives the film an undeservedly cheap look. On the other hand, the film is shortened by 10 minutes, a benefit for the limited attention span of American audiences.

The narration is perhaps the best factor of the Americanization. As noted, the lines are aptly written and aid in advancing the plot, the dubbing, however, is uneven. The voices for Mizuno and Fujichyo are dubbed well, but all the supporting characters are bland with many of the actors sounding as though they are reading their lines as opposed to acting them. James Hong, who worked on *Godzilla, King of the Monsters!*, dubbed Mizuno. Stuart Galbraith IV, in Japanese Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Films, credits Paul From (Steven Chao in *Coming to Town*) as one of the dubbing actors, yet Mr. From's distinctive voice is nowhere to be heard in *The Human Vapor*.

It is fair to say that Brenco's *The Human Vapor* bears comparison to DCA's *Rodan* (see *Kajya-Fan* #6). Both films 1.) use the lead

character is a narrator, while the Japanese versions are told in a linear fashion, 2) contain an important scene which has been moved to an earlier place in the American version (the existence of a second Rodin in Rodin and the revelation of Hirozumi's power in *The Human Paper*) and 3) through the use of a narrator, create an atmosphere of poignancy, although we are told how we should react to certain events in the Japanese versions of both films, the action is just as moving, but without a narrator, there is room left for interpretation. This last factor is especially true for the climax of *The Human Paper*. Honda's version leaves us to wonder if science has failed against the Vapor Man or if he's punished with his beloved Fuyukayo, Hirozumi's version has the Vapor Man survive, but lament that he has lost his only reason for living, condemned to walk the Earth alone forever. Each conclusion, in its own way, is heart-rendering.

As a director who preferred to view his films as documentaries, it would be interesting to know what Honda thought of Godzilla, *King of the Monsters*, *Half Human*, *Andon*, and *The Human Paper*, all of which use a narrator to relate the action, after all, documentaries are presented by a narrator. Yet, Yoshio Tachibana has been quoted as saying that he prefers the American version, seeing as he has an even bigger starring role in it!

Forcibly blood *The Human Paper*, making Tachibana's special effects as "dynamic," forming the narrative as "... sufficiently interesting ... to hold the audience's attention ..." and comparing the film favorably with its co-stars, *Godzilla* ("[*The Human Paper*] is the stronger of the two insofar as story development is concerned and leans heavily on expert special effects for its story premise." However, as is nearly always the case with Americanized *kaiju* films, the dubbing came in for criticism: "Paper has been dubbed in English, but the result is far from gratifying—unlike *Godzilla*—and the speaker is always aware that lips and words never match, thus decreasing realism."

In 1963, a sequel to *The First Human Paper* was in development. The script, entitled *Frankenstein in the Human Paper*, was written by Godzilla regular Shinichi Sekizawa and based on a story by John McCreath Lucas, the latter also being credited with writing the English language dialog for *The Human Paper*, as well as for *Godzilla*. In the story, a scientist named Dr. Gilder brings one of Dr. Frankenstein's monsters back from the dead. Learning of this, Mozuze approaches Gilder about reviving the corpse of Fuyukayo in a similar fashion. Yet this film was never made, the disappointing return for *The First Human Paper* had effectively ended Toho's experi-

ments in the "monster" sub-genre. Indeed, during the next 14 years, Toho would release only two more films that can be loosely classified in the mutant genre: *Motopago* (1963, US release title: *Attack of the Mushrooms People*, 1963) and *ESPT* (1974, US release title: *E.S.P. Spy*). As the box-office return for *Mocho* (1961, US release 1962, *See Kappa-Fan #9*) demonstrated, the Japanese movie-going public was only interested in films that featured daikaiju.

Curiously, the American video rights to *The Human Paper* (as well as *Godzilla*) were licensed to Video Gems, Inc. in 1985, only to be licensed again to Prime Video the following year! Of the two releases, the Prime tape is the superior of the two. The Video Gems tape is taken from a 16mm print and is basically no better than television broadcasts from the 60s and 70s. The Prime tape features a new transfer (probably from 35mm, with a new print scan of the wilderness images) and overall better quality. There are two additions about Prime's tape, however: the picture is slightly squeezed (preserving more of the original wilderness images, but making everyone look a bit thin) and the concluding character recap consists of freeze frames of the original character footage rather than the footage itself. The latter was probably done to hide damage encountered in the film print that was used. Several other companies released videos of *The Human Paper*, but these appear to be unlicensed, called from tattered TV prints.

Sekai Daisenso

(The Great World War)

Released October 8, 1961

Running Time: 110 minutes

The Last War

Release date unknown (presumably

1964 or after) by Binnacle Pictures

Running Time: 79 minutes

Formerly available from Video Gems

Analysis by Brian R. Culver

Following *Mocho*, Toho produced another special effects film in 1961, *Sekai Daisenso* (*The Great World War*). The film is a fictional "day after tomorrow" drama about the events leading up to a global nuclear conflict and its effect on Japan. Tada Satochi had made a similar film, *Daisengo Sekai Taisen: Toppakku Jikan no Kyoji* (*World War III at Hours of Fear*, 1960, US title: *The Final War*, 1962), the year before, which likely influenced

Toho's decision to take on the subject. Toho chose World War II veteran Shiro Matsubayashi to direct *The Great World War*, probably feeling that his prior experience in directing war epics such as *Taisho no Arashi* (*Storm Over the Pacific*, 1960, US title: *I Shooked Pearl Harbor*, 1962) and *Sensuden I-17 Kongo-shima* (*Submarine I-17 Hit the Sombrero*, 1959) made him the perfect candidate to convincingly portray a fictitious contemporary military conflict. Both previous films also featured the special effects work of Eiji Tsuburaya.

Although a barely qualifies as a genre film, *The Great World War* is a distant cousin to Toho's other science fiction releases of this era. The influences of the studio system under which it was made, Eiji Tsuburaya and to a lesser degree, Ishiro Honda (whose prior films no doubt established genre conventions) are all felt in the final product. The fact that the film is populated with actors and actresses from other Toho genre films, as well as the same pseudo-futuristic military hardware and set designs, also reinforces that relationship.

The US rights to *The Great World War* were purchased by Binnacle Pictures Corporation along with the rights to *Gas Wagon Deschigo* (*The First Human Paper*, 1960, US title: *The Human Paper*, 1964) and *Yaku Goroshi* (*Godzilla the Afootcannon Star*, 1962, US title: *Godzilla*, 1964). The film was eventually seen in America as *The Last War*, Toho's international title. Of the three films, the American release history of *The Last War* is the most difficult to accurately document. The film appears to have been released directly to television, where it has sporadically aired on local stations from the 1960s to as late as the early 1990s. Unlike *The Human Paper* and *Godzilla*, no American one-shot posters, pressbooks, lobby cards and/or any record of a theatrical showing are known to exist for this film. While this reinforces the supposition that *The Last War* was never shown in American theaters, there's evidence to suspect that such a release may have been planned originally.

Binnacle prepared a trailer for *The Last War*, which should not be confused with Toho's English-language trailer that appears on the recent Japanese laser disc of *The Great World War* (TLL-3450), as well as in at least one previous trailer collection. Binnacle's trailer is different, featuring John F. Kennedy's famous "monument must put an end to war..." speech (also heard at the conclusion of the American version) played over scenes of warfare from the film. The American version's credits also appear to have been designed for the big screen. The film's title fills the screen, appearing over footage that is nonstopically

"squeezed," which is often how widescreen film credits are adapted to fit: televisions proportions (most widescreen Japanese films released directly to American television feature properly framed credit text laid over pan-and-scan footage designed for TV viewing). Similarly, an acknowledgement at the film's conclusion extends past the edges of the television screen. Film advertising materials from a Mexican theatrical release are also known to exist—a release which may have been licensed through the American distributor as was common to non-Japanese releases of Toho's films during this era.

Part of the mystery concerns when the film first appeared in America. In his book, *Japanese Science Fiction, Fantasy and Horror Films*, Stuart Galbraith IV observed an important clue: the American version contains the song, "It's A Small World," which Galbraith notes "was originally written... for a Disney-sponsored exhibit at the New York World's Fair in 1964." This would clearly place *The Last War's* American debut sometime after that exhibit's premiere.

With one noteworthy exception, Breach's release follows the same sequence of events (minus deletions) as the original Japanese film, while reducing the running time by over 30 minutes via deleting large portions of the film which consist mainly of extraneous subplots. Given the scope of material removed, most of the differences described between the two versions will be in a more general manner than normally seen in the analysis of other films in this series. Where appropriate, **bold type** will denote material exclusive to the original Japanese version of the film.

The American version deletes the film's opening overture, a prefacing text noting a Showa 36th-year Festival of the Arts participation production, the Toho logo and the film's credits. The Japanese credits are shown over a scene of the Earth in space, surrounded by fog. A brief portion of this shot of the Earth (over which text appears that will be covered later in this article) appears at the end of the American version.

The Last War begins on a far more dire note than the Japanese version by opening with an abbreviated sequence from the original film's conclusion which stops just short of revealing the final outcome. On a ship at sea, a captain (Eijiro Tono) addresses his crew, granting their request to change course and return to Tokyo despite the danger of being exposed to radioactivity. As the ship turns around in the ocean, the film's US title appears over the shot. As mentioned previously, this scene is anomalously squeezed with the title filling the entire screen, which suggests that it

was originally composed with the intention of being seen in theatrical widescreen format. Following this, we see an officer, Takano (Akira Takamichi, dubbed in the US version by Marvin Miller, who would again dub Takamichi's voice for the English language version of *Kaya Daisensu* [The Great Monster War, 1965 US title *Monster Zero*, 1970, aka *Codzilla* or *Monster Zero*]), standing on deck. His thoughts are heard as an audible monologue, which contemplates the return to Tokyo and quickly turns into a reminiscence of the events leading up to this first scene. Much in the way Breach re-edited *The Hanesu Paper* in order to present the first two-thirds of the film as a narrated flashback, Takano's remembrance serves as a narration that de-

scribes the film's events in the past tense. Unlike the Japanese version (which is narration-free for most of the remaining film), Takano is heard throughout the film, partially as a means to hold the story together in lieu of several deleted scenes.

The aforementioned scene in the US version contains a couple of curious deviations from the Japanese version worth noting. It contains several brief shots (including the film's first shot) of the sea foaming from a ship's wake, none of which appear in the original film; the source of this footage (probably stock footage from a film library) is difficult to identify. Also, part of Takano's narration includes two shots from the original





Young lovers Takano (Akira Takarada, left) and Saeko (Yuko Hase) pityingly Japan's looking of helplessness towards Cold War tensions and the possibility of a global nuclear holocaust in *The Last War*

film of himself and the ship's cook, Ebano (Chieko Ryu), standing on the forward deck of the ship to the far left and right of the widescreen frame respectively. During the US "prologue" sequence, the pan-and-scan is centered on the frame so that neither man can be seen. When these shots are repeated at the end of the US version, however, the pan-and-scan is diffused, once at the left of the frame showing Takano and then again at the right to show Ebano.

Following this, the American version proceeds to the sequence immediately following the Japanese credits, showing footage of Tokyo and the everyday activity of its citizens working, playing, watching baseball, etc (although a few shots, several which are in black and white, have been removed). Part of this sequence in the Japanese version is supplemented with a narration describing the explosive post-World War II rebuilding of Tokyo and its citizens' action that the city would never fall again. In place of this unidentified narrator in the US version is Takano's voice. Takano's narration begins similarly to that of the Japanese version, but expounds more upon the footage being seen: as a baseball game is shown, he describes Tokyo as "second only to the US in baseball and just as happy to see the ball hit out of the park;" as we see a chorus line, he adds that his people "liked a good time and pretty girls," etc. The narration continues into the following scene that introduces Mokichi Tsumura (Frankie Sakai) and his family, with the narration replacing dialog from the Japanese version, allowing for the scene to be shortened.

In the Japanese version, the two global military powers depicted are clearly estab-

lished as The Federation and The Alliance—not individual countries, but rather a union of several nations similar to NATO or the Allied and Axis powers of World War II. The American version leaves the nature of these two forces vague and, whether deliberate or not, gives the impression that these are caricatures of the United States and Soviet Union. This is reinforced by the original Japanese production's over-the-top uniform designs, often overly formal with exaggerated rank stripes and chevrons. Also missing from the American version is mention that Japan is a member of The Federation.

Several scenes involving Mokichi and his co-workers (all of whom are chauffeurs) have been removed. These scenes depict their reactions to growing world tension, including the fact that Mokichi is playing the stock market based on the inevitability of war, selling his real estate holdings and investing in aviation stock.

Several references to illness in the Japanese version have been either downplayed or removed entirely from the American version. Mokichi's wife, Oyosho (Nobuko Otowa), is suffering from neuralgia (a painful malady of the nervous system), but is said to have a cold in the American version. When we are first introduced to Ebano, he is recovering from an ulcer, although the English dubbing never calls the illness by name. Scenes depicting the Japanese government's attempts to maintain world peace have been deleted as well, along with dialog in these scenes which corroborates that these efforts are being partially hindered by the Prime Minister's (So Yamamura) kidney ailment.

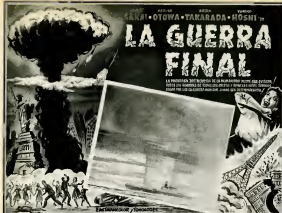
Brenzo felt a need to use Takano's narration as means to convey why his reunion with Mokichi's daughter, Saeko (Yuko Hase)—the woman that he will shortly propose to—is so strong and unreserved. Takano arrives at Mokichi's house where he will be staying as Saeko's guest. Saeko greets Takano and leads him upstairs where he sets down his suitcase and changes into a kimono as they make small talk. In place of the beginning of this conver-

sation, American audiences hear Takano's narration: "We Japanese cover our emotions pretty much. I had not seen Saeko for months. I had longed for her every day of the way. Yet custom and upbringing required that I greet her as though we'd been married for fifteen years and I were coming home from a routine day at the office. No grand passionate reunion scene, not even a fond embrace."

As the result of another removed subplot, all of actor Jerry Ito's appearances as the journalist named Watkins have been removed. In a few scenes, Mokichi drives Watkins to and from the press club as they hear radio announcements concerning world events, which seems to be what Watkins is covering. Later, Watkins visits Mokichi's home to talk to Takano. Watkins asks Takano (at first in English, which abruptly switches to Japanese) about a report he sent from his ship (in another scene common to both versions of the film) concerning a strange burst of light several of the crew saw one night. After listening to the description, Watkins determines that the crew saw the deployment of a sodium-based explosive device.

Takano and Saeko discuss their future and world events in front of a fountain in Tokyo. Whereas this scene in the Japanese version consists of dialog only, the American version begins this way as well, but segues into another of Takano's narrations. The nature of the war-related dialog is slightly different in both versions. The Japanese version's dialog discusses the escalating technology of warfare and the world population's need to have faith in the ability to prevent war. In contrast, this same scene in the American version talks of how nobody wants war except for a few obsessed world leaders who never personally reap the horror of what they sow. One example of how the American version utilizes the film's imagery while twisting the original dialog is when Takano is seen making the gesture of pressing his index finger against the palm of his hand; in the Japanese version, he says, "In the next war, if just one man panics and hits the wrong button, all mankind has done will disappear!" Accompanying this same scene in the US version, however, is Takano's narration: "... all we had to do is press a button and instead of blowing up a city, we launched a thousand ships full of food and medicine and toys for children."

A scene involving an averted, accidental launch at a Federation missile base and the events leading up to it has been shortened in the American version. Harold S. Conway plays the senior officer-in-charge during this particular watch. During a quiet moment, he discusses with his men their common belief that peaceful coexistence is possible despite



Although unadmitted theatrically in the US, *The Last War* may have seen a Mexican theatrical release, as evidenced by the lobby card above. Such foreign releases of Toho films were commonly licensed through the US distributor

world tension and how the pressure and fatigue of their duty as missile launch operatives lulls the men into misjudging the great responsibility of their role. Suddenly, the warning lights and alarms in the control center signal them to prepare their nuclear missiles for firing. As they prepare, more displays signal that various confirmations to fire are coming through. As they receive final confirmation, the senior officer places his finger on the firing button and breathes aloud, "God, please forgive me!" Via telephone, the staff officer orders them to stop the launch procedure because to such order was given. Locating a malfunction in the equipment, the firing courier is stopped with two seconds to spare. A technician explains to the senior officer that the erroneous firing order was the result of a short in the attack courier's power supply. "Why you?" the senior officer cries out, appearing ready to strike the soldier; instead, he hugs the man saying, "Thank God!" several times, relieved that the launch was averted. The American version adds an off-screen voice which counts down along with the clock visible in these scenes and includes only a brief shot of the firing button moved to just after the first alarm signals. Conway's embarrassing performance in this scene presents a strong argument in favor of dubbing.

Ebura's daughter (Yumi Shirakawa), a

preschool teacher, has her students sing her a New Year's song. In place of the original film's Japanese-language song, the US version substitutes the aforementioned, Disney-owned "It's A Small World." In addition, though Ebura's daughter only sings along with the children in the Japanese version, the American version dubs her singing voice trailing off at the end to give the children instructions "That's good remember your rhythm You're doing fine, all of you."

Another removed subplot consists of the false hopes raised as a cease-fire is called between the Federation and the Alliance. This is first mentioned right after an Alliance commanding general (Ed Kease) personally disarms a malfunctioning nuclear missile that is about to detonate. Both sides, as well as the Japanese government, are relieved at the hope this has given the world. Over a disputed zone, planes from both sides fly past each other in perfect formation as a form of celebration. Later, at the Federation waste base seen earlier, the senior officer and his men begin to talk of their plans after peace is established, but their banter is interrupted by news of two opposing aircraft accidentally colliding which causes both sides to start firing. One side deploys nuclear weapons in the skirmish, which irreversibly paves the way for an all-out nuclear shooting match.

Although the majority of cuts to the American version appear designed to emphasize the Takano/Saeko relationship, a significant portion of their scenes have been removed as well. On the night before Takano is to set sail for several months, he and Saeko stay together in a hotel, where they say their good-byes to each other. Although this scene isn't in the American version, it is referred to in dialog between Mochizuki and Oyashiro that is included. The next morning after Takano's ship has set sail, Saeko waves goodbye from the shore, although she is too far away for anyone on the ship to see her. On deck, Takano reveals to Ebura that he and Saeko were married before he left, fearing that the possibility of a world war would prevent them if they waited. Later, Takano uses the ship's radio to communicate with Saeko's home radio set. Via Morse code (translated by on-screen Japanese subtitles), they communicate for the last time: "You made me happy... we were both happy..."

Although no music was added from other sources, Ikuma Tanaka's music has been re-sequenced in some places. This is most apparent during the film's climax. In the Japanese version, the launching of nuclear weapons aimed at Tokyo and the resulting destruction of the city itself are left ominously unscored, this helps bring attention to the sound effects and images, and to the eerie silence in the moment before the first bomb explodes over the Diet Building. The American version, however, inserts music from another part of the film into both of these scenes. Due to the repetitive nature of Tanaka's score, it's difficult to determine precisely where in the film this music is borrowed from and, ironically, the American version's reuse of music in these scenes makes it seem even more repetitive.

In the Japanese version, the first nuclear missile over Tokyo is seen exploding (as a great flash of light) several seconds before the sound of the blast is heard; the sound comes only as the city begins to be blown apart by the resulting shock wave. This chillingly accurate depiction of such a blast was subverted in the American version, which

springs up the blast sound effect with the visual of the explosion.

Following the atomic holocaust, the Japanese version takes us to Takane's ship and the scene that begins the American version. The American version also returns to this scene and includes footage not used in the American prologue. In lieu of dialog, the sound of a ship's horn is heard, followed by the song, "It's A Small World." The song's inclusion seems to be inspired by the Japanese version's ending where the children's New Year's song is heard as Ebana, seeming to remember that moment as he stands on deck with Takane, breaks into tears. This footage of Ebana, as well as his closing dialog with the captain (just prior to this scene) about how unfortunate it is that this disaster couldn't have been averted has been removed from the American version. The song in the American version segues into a portion of the aforementioned John F. Kennedy speech heard in the American trailer, which continues into the footage that follows.

A final close-up of Takane holding back tears dissolves into footage of Tokyo's remains, common to both versions of the film. In the Japanese version, the closing music is heard over which a concluding message is superimposed stating that this film is fiction, may or may not be tomorrow's reality and that we must join forces to prevent this from becoming a reality. This is followed by a fade to a wood grain texture, over which the Japanese character "Owari" (The End) appears. During the same footage, the American version continues the Kennedy voice-over, which is succeeded by a stylized version of the original Japanese closing music that continues past the fade out.

The American version finally concludes with a brief acknowledgment appearing over the fog-enshrouded Earth (lifted from the Japanese version's opening credit sequence), as the original Japanese ending music continues to the end of the credits. As mentioned previously, the text of this acknowledgment continues past the edges of the television screen, making parts of it impossible to see. The following is a simulation of the message as seen on the screen; the bold text indicates what can actually be seen while the italicized text is an educated guess at what isn't visible.

The Producers gratefully acknowledge the cooperation of the People of Toho and the technical counsel of various scientific institutions of Japan in the filming of...

THE LAST WAR

A copyright notice appears below the film's title that is so small that the year and Brenco's company name can't be definitively read.

Considering all the factors against it, the American version of *The Last War* comes across as a surprisingly poignant and coherent film, which even more surprisingly seems to maintain much of director Shiro Matsuyoshi's original vision. Despite the massive amount of footage deleted, the story holds together well and one isn't left with the feeling that anything has been removed, due in part to Takane's narration which fills the gaps and sensitively complements the story. Similarly, even the mediocre dubbing doesn't seem to get in the way of the film's credibility, as evidenced by how moving Moloch's monologues of regret is despite being dubbed by a rather cartoonish voice. While much of the depth and realism of the original film has been abandoned, the American version comes across as much better than one would think possible considering the circumstances.

Although large portions of the original Japanese film featured English language performances, they have all been redubbed in the Americanized *The Last War*. This is a common practice in English-dubbed films and the uneven performance and heavy foreign accents found in this film (which wouldn't sound unusual to Japanese audiences unfamiliar with these languages) are a reminder of why it's done so often. While watching the Japanese version, one has to wonder if the diverse accents exhibited by the actors playing Federation and Alliance personnel was a deliberate attempt to represent the multinational nature of these organizations in the film or just a consequence of the availability of English-speaking actors in Japan at the time.

It is of interest to note the similarities between Brenco's *The Last War* and the Americanization of *I Bombed Pearl Harbor*, another Toho film directed by Shiro Matsuyoshi distributed in America by Parade Releasing. Both films are narrated by the central character and both films utilize excerpts from Presidential addresses (*I Bombed Pearl Harbor* begins and ends with portions of Franklin D. Roosevelt's "Yesterday, December 7, 1941, a date which will live in infamy..." speech). *I Bombed Pearl Harbor* also features some of the same voice actors heard in Brenco's Toho releases.

The new-defunct Video Gems released *The Last War* to US home video in 1985. The high pricing of the tape at the time (in excess of \$50, back when the cheapest "sell-through" tapes were about \$35) limited its exposure to video rental stores, though less expensive copies (probably remaindered) eventually

showed up in a handful of video sales outlets. The tape's acute material appears to be from 1986n, making it visually equivalent to a recording of a commercial-free TV broadcast of a relatively undamaged print. Unlike Brenco's other two Toho films, this was the only domestic video release of *The Last War*.

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TOHO IN AMERICA CORRECTION

In last issue's coverage of *Mothra*, we credited American Movie Classics host, Bob Doran, with narrating the American International Pictures/Trio-dubbed version of *Destroy All Monsters*, speculating that this may be the same voice used to dub Jerry Ito's character Nelson in *Mothra*. Since then, we have discovered that director Sergei Bondarchuk's 1968 theatrical adaptation of Tolstoy's *War and Peace* was dubbed for American release by Trio the same year as *Destroy All Monsters*. The same, unmistakable voice narrates both films and is credited on-screen to Norman Lane in *War and Peace*. Among his many stage, screen and voice over credits, Lane can be seen and/or heard in such films as *The Anderson Tapes* (1971), *Woody Allen's The Front* (1975), *Radio Days* (1987, again directed by Allen) and *Alien 3* (1988).

NEXT ISSUE:

**Gorath
King Kong vs. Godzilla**







STRUGGLING WITH GODZILLA

UNRAVELING THE SYMBOLISM IN TOHO'S SCI-FI FILMS

By TOM MILLER

In *Kayo Fan RI*, John Rocco Roberto discussed "Godzilla and the Second World War." While I agree in general with his opinions, I believe there are symbolic meanings in Godzilla movies beyond those addressed by John. Godzilla represents much more than the atomic bomb and the monster's symbolic status has not been static. This article will examine the symbolic nature of Godzilla and other kaisa as they have developed over time. (Editor's note: Films are identified by a commonly known US title, followed by original Japanese title and theatrical release date.)

Historical Background

To understand the symbolic and allegorical meanings of Toho's kaisa films, the context out of which they arose must be understood. Japan, the most industrialized and Westernized nation in Asia during the first half of this century (the only non-Western member of the Council of the League of Nations) found itself in a disadvantageous position at that time. Completely dependent upon imports of raw materials for survival, Japan recognized that access to these materials in Asia was controlled by the Western colonial powers. Other than Japan, only China was not under the direct control of a Western power. Too large to be subdued by any single power, China had been left open to all (including Japan) for exploitation. In the 1930s, Japan sought to expand its role in China with a goal of even-

tual control, at a cost of worsened relations with the United States, Japan's largest trading partner. Unable to subdue China and defeated by the Soviet Union in border clashes, Japan turned its attention to the Pacific.

Germany's initial successes in World War II brought about the defeat of some European colonial powers (such as France and the Netherlands) together with the near defeat of England and the Soviet Union. In July of 1941, when the United States (then the world's leading producer of oil) placed an oil embargo on Japan, the Japanese were faced with a choice: accede to US demands (in effect, surrendering without a fight) or go to war with a chance, however small, of achieving victory. Not surprisingly, Japan chose war.

Century to the claims of wartime US propaganda which nevertheless in this day, Japan had no intention of conquering the world or even the US. Japan's strategy was to create a self-sufficient, expanded Empire (the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere) which would encompass the raw materials needed for survival. Japanese naval and air units operating out of island fortresses would lure the US Navy into battle and defeat it, while US ground forces would be repelled by the same island fortresses. The US would be forced to negotiate a peace settlement which would recognize Japan's hegemony in Asia. But as Emperor Hirohito announced on August 15,

1945, the war had "developed not necessarily to [Japan's] advantage." After spectacular early successes, it was the Japanese Navy that was eventually destroyed while the island fortresses were either conquered or bypassed. Japanese cities were obliterated by the US Air Force in a series of raids. Japan was reduced to reliance upon a lost rich coastline (defense of the home islands, which would spare so many US casualties that a favorable peace might still be obtained, the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki ended that illusion. For the first time in over a thousand years, Japan had lost a war.

Enter Godzilla

The first kaisa sign, Godzilla, *King of the Monsters* (Gogira, 1954), is a stark re-enactment of the Second World War. Three of the men central to the film's creation had each been involved in the war. The director, Ishiro Honda, had served in the Imperial Army in China where he was taken prisoner. Eiji Tsuburaya, director of special effects, had mastered his techniques with miniatures while making re-enactments of naval battles for propaganda films—re-enactments so successful that during and after the war they were often mistaken for actual combat footage. The film's music composer, Akira Ifukube, had written marches for the Imperial Army and Navy. In the movie they made, Godzilla represents more than the A-Bomb, Godzilla is the United States itself.

Godzilla's very name emphasizes the monster's foreign nature. Gogira, as he is called in Japan, has his name spelled in katakana, the written characters used in Japan to represent foreign words (ゴジラ) (the katakana reading) could easily have been written as ゴジラ (the hiragana spelling) instead.

The course of Gogira follows the war in the Pacific as seen from the eyes of an ordinary Japanese. At first, there are reports of ships sunk, representing Japan's naval defeat and the destruction of its merchant marine fleet by US submarines. The government debates releasing this news, just as the wartime government heavily censored the reports of such defeats at Midway. The ship losses are disturbing, but not immediately threatening. Then Godzilla emerges on Oda Island, which stands for all the islands lost to the US, in particular Okinawa, the closest. Godzilla/US now threatens Japan directly. The monster's attack on Tokyo mirrors the destruction wrought by the US Air Forces. Japan's armed forces are helpless against the power of Godzilla. Japan's fighter planes drive back Godzilla temporarily, but clearly without harming the kaiju. Unlike the real war, this allegorical one ends with a Japanese victory as Dr. Serizawa's kamikaze attack in Tokyo Bay destroys the enemy. Yet the real threat presented by the US was not defeated and continued to be depicted in subsequent films.

Godzilla Raids Again (Gogira no Gyakushu, 1955) depicts not the Second World War, but the new Cold War and its implications for Japan. Imagery of the Cold War abounds in the film, which takes place in winter, snow and ice are used as visual clues to the film's concerns. Here Godzilla once more represents the US, with a new monster, Angilas, appearing as the USSR. Godzilla and Angilas begin fighting on an island north of Japan, representing the Sakhalin Islands which were and are a source of friction between Japan and the USSR. The two kaiju then bring their battle to Japan, causing horrific damage. Angilas/USSR is defeated, a defeat which leaves Japan at the mercy of Godzilla/US. Japanese pilots, veterans of the Pacific War, defeat Godzilla/US, with Kobayashi's kamikaze attack playing a prominent role in the victory.

The next Godzilla film, *King Kong vs. Godzilla* (King Kong no Gogira, 1963), is rightly seen as an East vs. West battle, however, the combatants do not represent the sides that most people in the West assume. In *King Kong vs. Godzilla*, we again find a mingling of Cold War and Second World War concerns. The film begins with a US nuclear submarine missing the heating up of the Cold War as Godzilla/US is freed from an iceberg. The

Secret Union does not play a major role in the film, this is primarily a Japan vs. US battle. Godzilla's first attack is against a Soviet military base in the Sakhalin Islands (the tanks are clearly marked with the Red Star of the Soviet Army). Godzilla/US easily defeats the Russians and moves towards Japan.

King Kong has been assumed to represent the West, but such is not the case. Kong's meeting goes back to Japan's goal in the Second World War. Kong is the natural resource of the Pacific Islands brought to Japan to enable that country to defeat the West. Other than name, nothing in the film connects Kong to the West. He is not intended to be the same Kong as in the original 1933 film, nor if he were would his symbolic role be altered. Understanding this sheds light on a long-standing rumor about the film. Whether intended as a publicity stunt or a joke by Ferry Ackerman of *Panama* (Monsters magazine), the false story that there were two endings (Kong winning in the West, Godzilla in the Asian version) was believed by American audiences and is still repeated today. Believing as they

do that Kong represents the US, it makes sense to American audiences that Japan's champion, Godzilla, would win in the Asian version. From a Japanese perspective, however, such an ending would not make sense. Kong's victory in a Japanese triumph because Godzilla represents the US. If an alternative Western ending had been filmed, Godzilla would have been shown swimming away leaving Kong submerged, the significance of which not likely to have been appreciated by American audiences.

Expanded Themes

The theme of Pacific resources had been explored earlier in a non-Godzilla film, *Mothra* (Mothra, 1963). In this film, the Robinsons (thirty-year-old Americans) bring destruction to Japan by their misuse of the Pacific resources. Note that these resources (Mothra), arriving in Japan in larval form, are "manufactured" in the last-try ocean scene and then released to

attack New Kikk City (New York). Japanese participation is required to restore order in the Pacific, shown by the return of the Fairies to Mothra. The message is clear: the Pacific is best managed by Japan, not the West.

The *Mothra/Pacific* theme is reprised in *Godzilla vs. The Thing* (Mothra no Gogira, 1964) with some interesting misgivings. Concern is expressed over the exploitation of the giant egg/Pacific resources by unscrupulous Japanese businessmen. Even so, despite Mothra's protests, the egg is not returned to Infant Island. Although capable of causing great destruction, Mothra accepts this decision and returns home peacefully. The arrival of Godzilla/US calls for the use of the Pacific resources to achieve Japanese victory. The adult Mothra's kamikaze attack weakens Godzilla, enabling the fresh resources represented by the larvae to defeat Godzilla.

Understanding the symbolic nature of Godzilla in *Godzilla vs. The Thing* helps explain one of the curious differences between the Japanese and American versions of the



In the original 1954 film, Gogira, the monster symbolizes to Japanese audiences not only the atomic bomb, but the United States itself.

film. In what is known as the *Frontier Missile* sequence, the US Navy attacks Godzilla as the kargo is walking along the shore. This sequence is absent from the Japanese version. On its face, there seems to be no reason for the absence of this sequence, as the special effects are on a par with the high standard set by Eiji Tsuburaya in that film. Symbolically, however, the scene makes no sense as Godzilla is the US, rendering the sequence useless in the Japanese version. For American audiences, to whom the help of the US Navy in its Japanese ally's battle appears natural, the *Frontier Missile* sequence does not cause any confusion.

Significant in the Japanese titles of both *King Kong tai Gogira* and *Mothra tai Gogira* is Godzilla's second billing. This is logical as in both films the top-billed kargo represents Japan with Godzilla remaining as the threatening US.

One of the few kargo films to refer directly to the Second World War, *Frankenstein Conquers the World* (*Frankenstein tai Chitai Kargo*, Baragon, 1965) presents an intriguing and somewhat disturbing view. The film begins with the transfer of the Frankenstein monster's heart from Germany to Japan during the war via submarine. (On a historical note, such transfers did take place, usually of advanced German weapons and blueprints in exchange for raw materials. The last such transfer, attempted by the German submarine U-234, included, among other items, an Me262 jet fighter packed in crates and a number of fuel containers filled with uranium for use in Japan's nuclear weapons research. The war in Europe ended while U-234 was still under way and the German ship surrendered; the two Japanese officers on board committed suicide.) The heart arrives in Hiroshima where it is subjected to the A-bomb attack. This combination of a Nazi heart with American technology produces not a fearful monster, but a benevolent one who defends Japan from Baragon. In the original script, Baragon's role was to be played by Godzilla, the change being made because the co-screen time was felt to be too short for Godzilla. The symbolism did not change. Baragon represents the US, deflected by a Japanese-German alliance as symbolized by the Frankenstein monster.

Shifting Symbols

Over time, Godzilla's symbolic role began to change, representing different perspectives of Japan's relationship with the US. Increased acceptance of the US as Japan's friend and ally, coupled with an increasing identification of Godzilla as a Japanese symbol would ultimately lead to a role reversal for the kargo.

In *Ghidorah, the Three-Headed Monster*



In *Frankenstein Conquers the World*, Frankenstein symbolizes a triumphant Japanese-German alliance, while Baragon represents the United States in a role that was originally slated for Godzilla.

(*Sando Kargo Chitai Saida No Kargo*, 1964) a new threat arises: China, which had recently exploded its first atomic bomb, thus winning the ranks of the superpowers. The view of Japan depicted in *Ghidorah* is that of a tiny nation surrounded by large, dangerous ones. Again, Mothra represents the resources of the Pacific used in Japan's defense. Mothra will help Japan immediately upon request, although such help is no longer sufficient by itself. Japan's infant military status vis a vis the nuclear powers is emphasized by the depiction of Mothra throughout the film in the larval stage. Godzilla continues to represent the US, while Rodan assumes the role of the USSR. Japan's image of these two is a bleak one: Godzilla and Rodan are interested only in fighting each other, unconcerned about any collateral damage suffered by Japan, after all, they say they have "had trouble" with Japan in the past. Even the threat of a resurgent

Ghidorah/China does not rouse them to action. Only when they are alarmed/inspired by Mothra's hopeless, kamikaze-style attack against Ghidorah do Godzilla and Rodan stop fighting each other to help fight Ghidorah. Ghidorah's large size and power represents the Japanese fear of the size and proximity of a nuclear-armed China, a threat more deadly than that of the US. The film ends with the disappearance of the Western kargo Godzilla and Rodan. Only the Asian kargo, Mothra and Ghidorah, are seen alive at the film's conclusion.

Monster Zero (*Kargo Daizensu*, 1965) portrays Godzilla/US in a new light, one that is returned to in *Destroy All Monsters* (*Kargo Sotokugai*, 1968). In these two films, Godzilla/US is seen as a powerful force, one not necessarily destructive, but which could without warning come under the control of

leaders moved to Japan. Both films find order restored when those controlling forces, rather than Godzilla, are defeated. To Japan, it is the unpredictable US government that is the threat now, not the essentially neutral nation itself.

A more dramatic shift in Godzilla's symbolic nature begins in *Godzilla vs. The Sea Monster* (Naseku no Doshu, 1966) and continues throughout the remainder (excepting *Destroy All Monsters*) of the original series. In the original story for *Godzilla vs. The Sea Monster*, King Kong, not Godzilla, was the main *kaigu*. This substitution could take place because Godzilla had by that time become a symbol of Japan for Japanese audiences. In this film, it is Godzilla who represents the natural resources of the Pacific used by Japan to fight Red Bamboo/China, just as later these resources would be used to fight Haders in *Godzilla vs. The Swag Monster* (*Goyra no Hedora*, 1971). This is made clear by the association of Godzilla with the Pacific Islands in *Godzilla vs. Sea Monster, Son of Godzilla* (*Goyra no Mōsaku*, 1967), and even *Godzilla's Revenge* (*All Kaigu Daikuguchi*, 1969). *Monster Island* (as first introduced in *Destroy All Monsters*) is an explicit representation of this concept. Note that Angilas in *Godzilla vs. Monster Island* (*Goyra no Gargan*, 1972) still represents a foreign power (either the US or the USSR). Angilas is easily defeated by the Japanese Self-Defense Forces when he first arrives in Japan. Only when accompanied by Godzilla's presence/approval

can Angilas enter Japan. Japan may request outside help, but it will fight its own battles now. By the time of *Godzilla vs. Megalon* (*Goyra no Meguro*, 1973), Godzilla has become simply an asset to be drawn upon in times of need.

Godzilla vs. the Cosmic Monster (*Goyra no MechaGoyra*, 1974) finalizes the transformation of Godzilla from an image of the US to one of the Pacific resources. Filmed at a time of increasing Japanese protests over the American presence on Okinawa (protests that would lead to the return of Okinawa to Japanese sovereignty), *Godzilla vs. the Cosmic Monster* is a latent depiction of East vs. West tensions. The Japanese view of an overly materialistic, soulless West is represented by MechaGodzilla. Angilas/USSR is quickly defeated by the technologically superior US. King Sector represents the spiritual values of the East which combine with the resources of the Pacific to destroy MechaGodzilla and the enemy military base on Okinawa.

This East vs. West battle is continued in *Terror of MechaGodzilla* (*MechaGoyra no Gyaokushu*, 1975). Here, Titanosaurus represents the misuse of the Pacific resources when placed in the wrong hands. MechaGodzilla is again the US, while Godzilla continues to be a resource on call. That the West is not to be trusted is shown by Dr. Mafusa's misguided cooperation with the West leading to destruction in Japan and his own and his daughter Katsura's deaths. The fantasy of Western-style

reliance on technology alone is depicted by MechaGodzilla's helplessness once deprived of Katsura's human guidance (soul). One final time, a kamikaze attack (Katsura's suicide) brings about the defeat of the West. *Terror of MechaGodzilla* brings us to the end of the war generations' Godzilla films. The new series films, beginning with *Godzilla 1985* (*Goyra*, 1984), are the products of a post-war generation and deserving of a separate analysis.

Final Thoughts

Nothing in this article should be seen as an indictment of the Japanese in general or the makers of the Godzilla films in particular as a warmongering, anti-US people obsessed with their defeat in the Second World War. The article's purpose is to demonstrate how films reflect the concerns of the culture that produces them. Japan is a resource-poor small nation surrounded by powerful countries that have been or could be enemies. That Japanese films deal with this on a symbolic level should be of no surprise. To a Japanese audience, a *kaigu* film in which the *kaigu* is defeated by an imported opponent is as natural as it would be unnatural to a US audience to see an American movie in which the monster is defeated with help from Mexico or Canada.

Horror and science-fiction films address the fears of their audience. By comparison, US monsters of the pre-World War II era such as Dracula, Frankenstein's Monster and the Wolfman (and even Kong) are killers, like gangsters or murderers. Dangerous to individuals, they are no threat to the nation itself. The rise of Nazi Germany and worsening relations with Japan in the 1930s was reflected in serials such as *Flash Gordon*. Yet even in those, the US is safe. The menace is far away and dealt with by Flash, who directs the actions of local allies near the source of the trouble. The US does not have to mobilize an armed force to deal with Ming the Merciless. Not until the post-war period is the US faced for the first time with an enemy, the USSR, that is seen as having the power to defeat or even destroy America. This threat was reflected in movies such as *Them!* and *War of the Worlds*, wherein the monsters have the power to defeat the US.

Popular movies intended for general audiences, such as the Godzilla films, are often ignored by serious mainstream critics. Yet it is in those that we can most often find the fears of those audiences being displayed and resolved at a symbolic remove. No one in Japan was ever worried about an attack by a giant mutated *Titanosaurus Rex*, but the concerns about defeat in war and nuclear attack were all too real.



The mid-1960s witnessed a change in the symbolism present in Toho's *kaigu* epics. In *Godzilla vs. The Three-Headed Monster* (1964), Godzilla (USA), Rodan (USSR) and Ghidorah (China) signify the warring superpowers, while the less-powerful Mothra larvae (Japan) struggles to maintain order.

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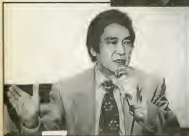
1998 KAIJU CONVENTION COVERAGE



(Above) Gertrude Smith relaxes under the protection of MechaGodzilla (Paul Gavira)

(Above right) Godzilla suitman actor Kenpachiro Satsuma (same) it up with Godzilla (Dennis Lancaster) prior to Friday night's screening of TriStar's Godzilla at G-CON '98

(Right) Scene from a lost Godzilla film? No, it's just another outstanding entry in the G-CON '98 Model Contest!



1998 was quite a year for the conterminous kaiju fan. The much-anticipated American Godzilla film was finally released last Spring under a flurry of excitement, expectation and controversy. And despite whether you liked or disliked the film, TriStar's Godzilla ultimately pushed the Big Guy (and Japan's kaiju eiga, in general) to the forefront of the public's eye, even if only to criticize the flawed film.

But there was so much more to 1998 than just taking pot shots at a \$300 million dollar "bombe." 1998 was once again host to an array of Japanese sci-fi conventions in the US. And although official support from companies like TriStar and Toho were next to non-existent at these events during "The Year of Godzilla" (ironic when you consider the support that they could have used as the US Godzilla film bounced down the box office charts), it was the dedicated fans who ultimately upheld the custom of "for the fans, by the fans."

First up was G-CON '98, which boasted the most impressive celebrity guest list ever assembled for a genre convention, including Ken Satake, Haruo Nakajima and Yoshio Tsuchiya. G-Fan held their second annual convention, now christened G-Fest, while the influence of Japanese sci-fi became increasingly more prominent at the East Coast's largest sci-fi and horror show, the Chiller Theatre Toy, Model and Film Expo. For a recap of the year in conventions, just turn the page.

(Below left) The Human Vapor materializes in the form of distinguished sci-fi film star Yoshio Tsuchiya at G-CON '98

(Below) Kaiju eiga historian Keith Sewall presents Godzilla suit actor Haruo Nakajima with a stunning artwork tribute to his past roles.



G-CON '98 CHICAGO

By John Rocco Roberts

America's premiere Japanese sci-fi and fantasy convention, G-CON, celebrated its fifth year of bringing fans the best in convention entertainment. Returning for the third year is a new, celebrity guests Haruo Nakajima and Kappachiro Satsuna (*The Men Who Are Godzilla*) were joined by veteran Toho sci-fi film actor, Yoshio Tsuchiya (the Controller from *Planet X in Monster Zero*), in his first ever appearance at an American sci-fi convention. Titled to coincide with the excitement generated by the release of TriStar's *Godzilla*, the two-day convention was held on May 23-24, 1998, although the actual festivities took up the better part of the week!

On Wednesday May 20, the G-CON '98 celebrity guests promoted the TriStar G-film and the upcoming convention by signed autographs for the fans at a special appearance at the Randolph Mall. On Thursday May 21, a historic event took place as the Sci-Fi Channel hosted a live question and answer session via the Internet with *The Men Who Are Godzilla*. The response was overwhelming as several dozen fans crammed the online moderated chat area to ask questions for over an hour—truly a first in the history of Japanese sci-fi fan events.

The fun really began with a blast on Friday night, however, as 250 pre-registered convention attendees joined G-CON's special guests

(Right) Kaiju fan Rossane Gunka and her boyfriend, Chris, hang out with veteran Toho film star, Yoshio Tsuchiya, at where else, but G-CON '98.

(Below) Kaiju-Fan cover artist John Woodard kneels proudly by a display case of his artwork.
Photo by John Rocco Roberts



(Above) Haruo Nakajima gives a young fan a hi-five at the Friday night TriStar *Godzilla* screening.
(Right) Kappachiro Satsuna (center) fields the fan's questions with the help of Yoshikiko Sribata (left) and John Newman.
Photo by John Rocco Roberts



(Above). One last group shot before G-CON's celebrity guests return to Japan. "Ya'll come back now, ya hear?"
(Right) Frightened after the day's events, Godzilla mistakes Jay Johnson's head for a nuclear reactor; Jay always did have a "glowing" personality.



(Above left) Eric Yee breathes life into his fantastic Cyber-Zilla costume.
(Above) Dennis Lancaster's superb entry into the Costume Contest: a huge Mother Llava.
(Left) Godzilla (Dennis Lancaster) gets a hug from an appreciative young fan.

for a screening of TriStar's *Godzilla* in a local Sony theater. An enjoyable time was had by all who attended, especially when Godzilla himself (courtesy of Dennis Lancaster wearing his own handcrafted kaju suit) greeted the fans as they departed the buses which had brought them to the theater. All this fun and G-CON hadn't even begun!

Saturday morning had finally arrived and like kids waiting for Christmas morning, 650 people jammed the Radisson Hotel in Arlington Heights, IL for the fifth annual fan convention. Over 40 dealers tables, two presentation rooms which featured simultaneous programming throughout the day and a special display and prop room with online Internet link-up gave the fans and guests alike plenty to see and do. It was difficult to tell who was having a better time!

The centres at The Saturday Night Costume Party far surpassed anything from the previous years and allowed the talents of several fine artists and craftsmen to strut their stuff. Once all the costumes had been checked out of, it was time to party to the rock-n-roll sounds of Jay Johnson and The Southern Rock All-Stars, who jammed long into the night.

Sunday was a more relaxed day, as fans enjoyed both the third annual Kaju Film Contest and the North American premiere of *Gappa—The Zuphius Monsters* (courtesy of Media Blasters/Kaju Productions) while snapping up final purchases in the huge dealers room. The now-famous "Godzilla Blood" Party was the perfect after-hours way to wrap things up.

(Above left): An amazing Godzilla vs King Ghidorah resin kit build-up by Fred Piccolo Jr. (Above) On display in the G-CON prop room are various items from the Club Daikaiju collection including an original fibreglass Legion head, an autographed Legion sketch by Fuyuko Shirade of V-Shop and a Little Godzilla maquette signed by Kohshi Kawakita. (Left) Gamera battles Legion in an impressive model drama by Chris Hennes.

Photos by Jim Christoffe

G-FEST '98 CHICAGO

By Jeff Horne

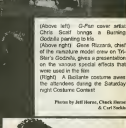
G-Fest '98, held on July 31st through August 2nd 1998 at the Wyndham Hotel in Itasca, IL, joined the fine tradition of high quality, fan-run Japanese sci-fi conventions held in the United States. The theme of last year's convention, co-sponsored by *G-Fan* and *Prehistoric Times* magazines, was "Fantastic Dinosaurs of the Movies". While TriStar's *Godzilla* had already faded from theaters, it was Toho's *Godzilla* and other prehistoric giants that ruled the weekend.

The convention kicked off on Friday afternoon with screenings of A.D. Vision Films' dubbed versions of *Gamera, Guardian of the Universe* and *Dietary All Monsters*. Many Japanese fantasy, animation and dinosaur films were also screened throughout the weekend. Aside from the screenings and the dealers room "mudhouse" which opened at 6:00 pm, Friday was mainly an opportunity to get settled into the hotel and snap up some good purchases. There was also a late night "Monster Mixer" featuring a live band, I didn't make it since it was past my bedtime and it was going to be a long weekend.

Saturday's festivities kicked off with a welcome session by *G-Fan* editor JD Lees and *Prehistoric Times* editor Mike Fredericks. The convention was laid out much better than the previous year with the larger room being used as the main dealers room, while a smaller dealers room was located right next door. There was also a sparsely-filled model, artwork and prop display room that featured kaja pupes, toys and memorabilia from the Showcase Collectibles collection. This room featured many excellent pieces of fan art, as well, but very few model kits, the latter is not too surprising given the thefts that occurred at both 1997 conventions.

There was another room in which Chris Scalf refurbished another dynamic *Godzilla* painting, this time, *Godzilla 1998* came to life over the course of the show. *Godzilla* video games were enjoyed by all, as was Randy Giesey's "Godzilla Rules" strategy game played with Bandai figures.

The Model Building Instructional Room ran many sessions by Stan Hyde, Larry Brukney and others. Topics ranged from a pointers session for beginners to diorama building and airbrush techniques for the more advanced modelers. Being of intermediate level myself, I found these sessions to be very informative and enjoyable.



(Above left) G-Fan cover artist Chris Scalf brings a Burning Godzilla painting to life.

(Above right) Gene Rizzardi, chief of the miniature model crew on TriStar's *Godzilla*, gives a presentation on the various special effects that were used in the film.

(Right) A Bionicle costume awes the attendees during the Saturday night Costume Contest.

Photos by Jeff Horne, Chuck Horne & Carl Seals





(Above): The Gargantuan brothers, Sarda (right) and Gair, make an appearance in the G-Fest '98 dealers room, courtesy of House of Monsters. Only \$825 and they could be sitting on your shelf!

(Right): Humorous "scratch build" model contest entry by G-Fest '98 organizer, Neil Cox, entitled "1998 Tri-Star Godzilla." Was it voted the people's choice best of the show?

Photos by Jeff Horne & Chuck Horne



(Above): An elaborate "Destroyer Altador" in a spectacular 2-part model done by Andrew Shields.
(Right): "Godzilla 1998" stomps again in a superb diorama created by Tom Trivik.

(Opposite page, far right): Jim Strale's flying form "Space Godzilla" illustration entitled "Houston, We Have a Problem" on display.

(Opposite page, left): A reunion of the Brothers Horne under the watchful gaze of the King of the Monsters.

Photos by Jeff Horne & Chuck Horne



G-Fest '98 showcased some very interesting presentations on a wide range of topics. In addition to the ongoing model building sessions in the Model Room, there were two main presentation rooms. It has been said that G-Fest is more presentation-oriented than most sci-fi and comic conventions and this show was no exception. The Guest of Honor was renowned dinosaur artist Bill Stout, who worked on the ill-fated Godzilla 3-D film in the early 1980s and is currently working on a computer animated dinosaur film from Disney to be released in 2000. Based around a lunchtime buffet, Stout presented the almost 300 storyboards he had created before the 3-D film's production had ceased. The presentation was a narrative of the film's script highlighted with slides of the storyboards, from the opening credits through Godzilla's ultimate demise by the military's missiles. (Hm, I guess Devlin and Emmerich even "paid tribute" to unmade films in TriStar's Godzilla.)

Another popular presentation was by Emmy Award winner Gene Ruzzard, chief of the miniature model crew on TriStar's Godzilla, who gave quite a bit of insight into the effects of the film, by far the only aspect of the film to receive praise from all areas. Gene ran through a slide show of stills from the various model shots used in the film. We learned that the buildings during the helicopter attack in New York were filled with various objects, like beer cans, pretzels and family portraits in order to make them look occupied.

Monsters Are Attackin' Tokyo! author Stuart Gallarath IV gave a presentation on "Little Known Toho Treasures," featuring discussions of non-kayge films such as *Lar Pagar Free-For-All* with the Pearats, Em and Yumi Its. Author David Kalin presented a lovely session that covered "Mad Science in Godzilla Films." By the end, it became a rousing discussion of the likelihood of human cloning given the moral and theological implications. I've got to hand it to us kayge fans—we are a deep crew.

Another fine session was "Godzilla Unmade" by authors Steve Rylle and Ed Godziszewski. Utilizing many production sketches and marketing promos, they covered films such as *The Volcano Monsters*, *Star Godzilla* and even *Godzilla vs. Cleveland*. Bob Eggleton was also on-hand to give a presentation of his fantastic Godzilla artwork for Dark Horse Comics and Random House, including a self-portrait in *Who's Afraid of Godzilla* on page 11 (he's the passenger on the boat with the goats and sunglasses). This session included an overview of the artwork that has been used to market Godzilla films in past years, as first seen at G-CON '95.

Unfortunately, shortly after arriving in Chicago, Space Godzilla's screenwriter Hiroshi Kishiwada had to return to Japan prior to the start of the show due to the death of his father.

Continued on page 47

CHILLER THEATRE

By John Parkinosa

Twice a year, the Chiller Theatre Top Model and Film Expo is held in New Jersey and offers up one of the best horror & sci-fi conventions around. Last Halloween weekend was no different. This show presents the entire spectrum of horror and sci-fi, from the classics to the "B" movies to the screen queens. Somewhere in the middle, you'll find some Japanese science fiction and fantasy thrown into the mix, as well.

For all you G-CON veterans, some very familiar faces can be found among the show's dealers, including Showcase Collectibles, Applause Inc., Zakka, Oyster Lovers, Klam and the gang from M-3 of Japan. At the Fall '98 show, "Brink Dad" was also kind enough to offer some table space for a few Godzilla knock knacks from Club Daikyoja.

In addition to the dealers who specialize in Japanese goods, plenty of kaju-related items can be found among the other dealer tables, as well. For instance, Mad Lab Models displayed a new line of 1" tall conical monster figure resin kits which featured a few new takes on Godzilla such as "Santa-G" and "Blat-G." And the Japanese sci-fi invasion didn't end at the dealers room, either, as kaju was well represented in the model contest with lots of Godzilla and King Ghidorah.

As for special guests from Japan, this herself, Yuko Moriyama, the star of *Zeiram*, *Zeiram II* and *Moon of Tao*, was on hand courtesy of Inteling International to greet the fans and sign autographs. (See *Kaju-Pan 98* for an interview with Mr. Moriyama. -Ed.)

So for all of you kaju fans looking for your next convention fix, be sure to add Chiller Theatre to your list. To get more information about Chiller Theatre, call (201) 894-8040 or visit them on the World Wide Web at <http://www.chillerttheatre.com>

(Above right). Zeiram star Yuko Moriyama checks out an issue of her favorite American-made Japanese sci-fi fanzine.

(Above far right). A Ribbles 1984 Godzilla diorama by John Parkinosa stomps its way through the Chiller Model Contest.

(Right). The usual suspects in the Chiller Theatre dealers room include (from left to right) Jennie and Sean Linkenback of Showcase Collectibles, Greg Centeno of Klam and Scott Horton of Applause Inc.



More Chiller dealers room pical (Opposite page, far left). It's tough to miss a four-foot Karagen figure amongst all the goodies (Opposite page, left). A fierce struggle for table space ensued between "Beane Dad" and Club Daikija; the aftermath wasn't pretty.

(Right) Toshiki maps an impressive selection of G-model kits at the Zakka tables.

Photos by John Parkinson & Jim Cirrone



Continued from page 43

The assistant remained to answer questions about Japanese fantasy films and the fandom.

Saturday night is what I consider "family time," featuring amateur videos, the costume contest and the newly-added Kagu Call contest. The costume contest featured several Maryas, Godzilla Avatars, King Kong, Ultraman, a Fantastic Beilante, a first place-

winning Godzilla by Omar Sayyah and a two-year-old Incredible Hulk. This year's fan-produced videos featured many impressive and interesting entrants, and even included a automation entrant. My favorite entry and first prize winner was a stop-motion animation video entitled *R8 Godzilla's Revenge* which really captured the essence of *Godzooky*! I believe the Saturday evening events bring out

KAIJU-CON NEW YORK

By Jim Cirrone

In the tradition of the many enjoyable one-day anime conventions that have taken place since 1995, KAIJU-CON '98 was once again held at the Hotel New Yorker on August 29th, 1998. While not nearly on scale with either G-CON or Chiller Theatre, the show nevertheless boasted over 300 people in attendance and many things to do throughout the day.

Japanese sci-fi collectibles dealers such as Creature Feature Productions, Showcase Collectibles, Outer Limits, Zakka and Club Daikija packed the convention's dealers room with over 20 tables of quality merchandise to choose from. Throughout the day, there were a number of interesting presentations and panel discussions which featured such noted genre speakers as Keith Sewell, Robert Dinadi, John Russo Roberts and Brian Calver. Random House's *Godzilla* author Marc Caserio discussed his work on the *Godzilla* book series and generally mingled with the fans. Marc, along with Jim Cirrone, also led an informative panel discussion on the state of kaiju eiga, which included behind-the-scenes info on the upcoming films, *Gamera III* and *Mothra 3*. The day was rounded out with the New York premiere of the Japanese subtitled version of *Geggs, The Triphibian Monster*, courtesy of Media Blasters/Kaiju Productions. All in all, a great time for only \$5.00 admission!

(Above, far right) Mad Labs Models debuts a series of 1" tall mini-monster caricature resin kits including "Santa-G" and "Bar-G."

(Above right) The Hotel New Yorker in New York City, home to many a past Japanese sci-fi kaiju convention.

(Right) The awe-inspiring 1964 King Ghidorah model gave the other entrants in the Chiller Theatre Model Contest sufficient reason to worry.

Photos by John Parkinson and Christopher Roberts

the humor and friendship that makes this hobby fun, which is really what a *Godzilla* convention is all about. (Sniff, sniff...)

Although both *Godzilla* conventions will be leaving Chicago next year, G-Fest '98 made me seriously consider booking a flight to keep the tradition alive. Kaiju fans are a special breed; we really know how to put on a great fan gathering.

THE WITCH AND HER WARRIORS

by Lenell "Ultra" Bridges, Gertrude Smith and Robert Dagg

CHAPTER 1: THE ATTACK BEGINS!

Ever since her secret island of fire and ice, the evil witch, Surtarna, sits on her throne and discusses her plan for world domination with the allies she has brought together.

"See, hee, hee!" Surtarna laughs wickedly. "Soon the world will be mine! Nothing will stop what is about to happen. If mankind does not meet my demands for complete world rule, I will destroy everyone with my army."

The witch has issued an ultimatum to all of Earth's leaders: either accept her terms of unconditional surrender or watch their countries be destroyed. Her threat has caused panic and chaos among the people of the world and the governments of many nations have called emergency meetings to decide how to deal with this grave situation.

After many days of talk, the world's leaders have come to an agreement. On CNN and every broadcast network around the world, President Clinton of the United States addresses the people of the world on behalf of all the nations.

"To the American people, as well as all citizens of the world..." President Clinton begins the message. "Our government and the rest of planet Earth have made the decision that we will not surrender to this mad witch. We of the various nations of Earth do not believe that Surtarna can carry out her threats and think that the entire matter is a hoax. If this evil witch does try to carry out her threat, then we will fight her to the end!"

Back at her island lair, Surtarna watches the President speak from her crystal ball and grins her yellow-stained teeth in anger. "So, you foolish mortals will not surrender to me, eh? Very well, then! You all will be punished for your defiance! Prepare yourselves to die!"

Waving her hands over the glowing sphere, Surtarna screams, "Oo, my warriors and monsters! Kill... kill... kill them all!" Lightning from the evil witch's hands shoots into the crystal ball and then streaks up to the sky above the island, going to all parts of the Earth.

Five minutes later, in the Brentwood suburb of Los Angeles, California, where a home to many Hollywood stars, actress Pam Dwyer, her son Sean and daughter Ty are out for a walk in the usually quiet neighborhood when

they suddenly hear a strange roar. A man runs by and shouts, "All hell is breaking loose! It's the end of the world!" Suddenly, they see more people, running in terror. "Run! Run for your lives!" screams a fleeing woman. Pam looks up and sees the reason for the panic, she gasps and begins to run, pulling her children along with her. The skull monster Red King has appeared and is destroying the lovely community. Red King roars as he brings his giant foot down on Old Simpson's house, killing everyone inside instantly. As they flee the destruction, Pam wonders, "What's going on? What the hell is happening?"

In Seattle, Washington, King Ghidorah has appeared and is using his anti-gravity rays to devastate the city. Canada is attacked by three monsters, using their frozen weapons. Bangkok, Igneous and Gander have begun to turn the entire country into a frozen wasteland. Near Chicago, Illinois, the Itasca area is struck by a huge earthquake originating near the Wyndham Hotel. The structure breaks apart and drops into the Earth. A clawed hand appears and the monster Tolodon runs out of the ground. With his fiery breath, the subterranean creature destroys a few more nearby buildings before commencing his rampage.

Other monsters and aliens are appearing all over the world. Gyaos in Moscow, King Satan in Las Vegas, Kono appears in Hong Kong, while Vangary returns to Korea after a 30-year absence. Destroyer attacks New York, as Ultraman Shadow lays waste to Detroit. Snake King devastates England, Gigan assaults Germany, while Jiger threatens Paris. Various aliens from Balzo, Yapool, Lugos and Planet X have combined forces and now launch their attack against the Earth from a secret base which has been constructed by the Kaisaks on the far side of the Moon. Alien Benzon and Goudes combine forces to attack Australia. In San Francisco, the space monster Dogora hovers above the Golden Gate Bridge, the jellyfish-like kagu grabs the structure with its tentacles and lifts it up onto the sky like a toy. Hundreds of neonists are killed as Dogora drops the huge bridge into the water far below.

More monsters and aliens appear as Surtarna watches the destruction in her crystal ball. She smiles wickedly as her allies cheer. Dr. Gori, the space ape, his sidekick Karai as he dies, speaks the sentiments of all those present. "It was a good idea to combine our

forces! Thank you, Mistress Surtarna."

"Gori is right!" Rodak adds quickly. "Separately, we failed in our attempts to conquer this planet. But now, with all of us working together, we are invincible! Ha, ha, ha, he!" Sitting nearby, the alien Z-Ton and Dada make their distant sounds of approval.

Surtarna smiles evilly as she and her cohorts watch their diabolical plans unfold in her crystal ball. "First the Earth, then the Universe. There will be nothing for all of us. If you continue to follow my commands to the letter, we all will get what we desire. Remember, I was the one who brought you into the real world, using my magic, I summoned you from the genre of Japanese science fiction and fantasy to be my soldiers. I have decided not to attack that country at this time. When the rest of the world is under our control, Japan will quickly and willingly surrender to me! Besides, why should I attack the country that has so generously supplied me with the army I need to conquer the entire planet?" Surtarna is very pleased with how everything is working out.

"Hee, hee, hee!" Rita Repulsa is sitting nearby, gleefully clapping her hands as she adds her approval. "Oh, I have waited for this day for so long! Look at those fools, running in fear from our army! Those accused Power Rangers stole my very movie in the past, but now I'm coming up with the rest of you, this planet will easily fall under our feet!" Baron Gorgo, who is sitting next to Lord Zedd, agrees with a nod and a grin.

Just then, one of Surtarna's guards rushes up to the witch and whispers into her ear. "What? He's escaped?! Find him, you fools! And put those two idiots, Bulk and Skull, to death for this! They were in charge of keeping him imprisoned. Now he could be a threat to my plans because of this blunder. If you fail to find him and bring him back, it will be your hide, too!" The guard hares out, fearing for his life.

"Calling Emperor Gurlitene..." Surtarna says into her crystal ball. From his space saucer, Gurlitene responds and awaits her command. "Order your Gargoyle gang to begin their attack on Washington, D.C. I want the city destroyed and the American President captured and brought here in chains! He will be an example to all of Earth's leaders who wish to defy me. If anyone else gets in my way, they will also be punished! Launch your attack now!"

"Yes, at once, witch Surtarna!" Gurlitene issues his orders to the Gargoyle commander: "Spider, prepare to attack!" As soon as Gurlitene's ship lands in the heart of the city, Gargoyle soldiers rush out, shooting at anyone in sight.

Spider grins manly as he fires his pistol. "We're going to win! Keep up the attack!"

beside him, the evil Shockor and his army of man-monster mutants are more than willing to attack the residents of the capital city.

Shockor sneers as he and his troops march with Spider: "That motorcycle-riding fool, Karen Rider, stopped me from taking Japan. Without his interference, conquering this planet will be easy!"

His ally is not amused by his ranting. "Hey, Shockor! Don't forget you have help now, thanks to the witch Surtarna," Spider quips. "She brought all of us together. And you are not the only one who has had problems trying to take over Japan, that blasted Unseen kid, Johnny Solkin, and that giant robot of his foiled my every scheme."

As these forces of evil move through Washington toward the White House, the robot monster of the alien of the Fourth Planet of the Black Hole, MechaGodzilla, is battling the National Guard. It looks up just as a squadron of Air Force jets arrives, firing their guns and missiles. Suddenly, MechaGodzilla's eyes blast forth two twin ray beams, disintegrating the planes before the pilots can even eject.

Back at her island, Surtarna sits on her throne, smiling her wicked smile as she watches the events that she has orchestrated unfold in her crystal ball. Her allies cheer and laugh at how easy their victory will be.

CHAPTER 2: ENTER THE GOOD WITCH

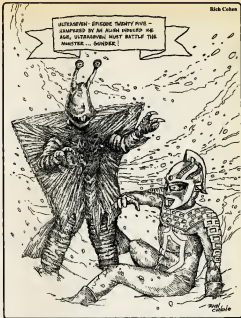
Meanwhile, in a small town not yet afflicted by the monster invasion, Rupert Brown has invited his schoolmates, Amelia Daly and Tetsuya Sakurawi, over to his house to watch television. Events happening around the world are being reported on the local news.

"This is horrible!" Amelia cries, putting her hands over her face. "Can anything stop them?"

"These aliens and creatures are from my homeland of Japan," Tetsuya gravely informs his American friends. They look at him in amazement, but are drawn back to the TV screen and its reports of ever-increasing devastation. "They come from our Japanese science fiction and fantasy genre. But how did they get into the real world?" Tetsuya ponders as he continues to watch in disbelief.

"If they are not stopped, they will destroy the world!" Rupert exclaims. Just then, there is a knocking on the door. He looks out the window and what he sees is a complete surprise. "Hey! There's a strange creature out there!" The children rush downstairs to the door.

"It's Pignon!" Tetsuya exclaims, recognizing the fired-looking, little monster. They help



Pignon into the house and place him on Rupert's bed. Amelia hurries to the kitchen to get some water as Rupert looks down at him with grave concern.

"He must have come a long way," the young scientist surmises. "But why would he come here and especially looking for us?"

Amelia gives Pignon some water. As he drinks, the monster looks at his surroundings and sees a drawing that Rupert has made with Surtarna's likeness on it. The little monster begins to yell most fearfully! The children try to calm him down as he wildly gestures at the picture Rupert has removed from the corkboard and brought over to the bed.

"It's Surtarna! She must have something to do with what's happening all over the world," theorizes Rupert.

Amelia coaxes Pignon to lie back down and soothes him that he is safe before asking, "But how, Rupert? I thought Miss Switch

imprisoned her in ice on an island. We left Surtarna there when she tried to get revenge against Miss Switch and as after the first time we foiled her plans."

"Who is Miss Switch?" Tetsuya asks. His friends tell him how they had two previous adventures with their school teacher who turned out to be a good witch in disguise. In the first adventure, they had helped to save Miss Switch from banishment at the hands of Surtarna. In the second adventure, they had unknowingly freed an evil warlock from his prison ship, it turned out that he was working with Surtarna, helping her to get revenge against Miss Switch and the children. Of course, the evil witch was foiled again.

"Maybe Miss Switch could help us, but I don't think she would stand much chance against all those aliens and monsters," Tetsuya figures.

"Wait!" Rupert exclaims all of a sudden.

"Why not fight fire with fire?" He smiles at his two friends. "I have an idea, Tetuya. don't you have a magazine of heroes and monsters that fight for good in the Japanese warrior fiction genre?"

The Japanese boy understands what Rupert has in mind. "Yes! I have a copy of *Kaya-Fan* in the backpocket on my favorite downtown! I'll go and get it!" Tetuya hurries off.

Amelia has finally calmed Pigmon down and comes over to Rupert. "Tetuya is getting his magazine," Rupert tells her. "We now have to call Miss Switch."

The children join hands and close their eyes to summon the good witch "Miss Switch!" the two children chant. "Come on, Miss Switch! Your enemy, Sarutama, has returned and she is trying to conquer the Earth! We need your help! Please come in, Miss Switch... WE NEED YOU!"

Tetuya returns with the magazine and sees his friends behaving quite oddly. Suddenly, light appears in front of the children, a stream of magic light appears, growing bigger. Amelia opens her eyes and happily claps her hands. "It's her, Rupert!" she exclaims. "We have a chance now!"

Tetuya is stunned by these events. "I have heard of the ancient legends of witches," he says, "but I never thought that I would meet a real witch!"

The swirling particles slow down and the good witch, Miss Switch, along with her sidekick, Bathsheba the talking black cat, appears, hovering on her broomstick in front of the three children.

"I am here, Rupert and Amelia, and I know why you have called me," Miss Switch says, in her normal witch's tone. "We must stop Sarutama or she will destroy the Earth with her army of monsters! What we have to do could be dangerous, are you willing to take the risks necessary to save the Earth?" The three children solemnly agree, nodding their heads.

Miss Switch makes a magical gesture with her right hand, *Kaya-Fan* flies from Tetuya's

grip and hovers above them. With both hands raised, the good witch calls out "Go, my warriors of good! Stop Sarutama and her evil warriors! You have defeated them in your world of fantasy many times and now, you must defeat them in our real world. Go! Go! Go!" She shoots magical dust at the hovering book and it strikes out the open window, vanishing high above the little town. As it soars away, its magic spreads across the sky, covering the Earth.

"Will that do, Miss Switch?" Rupert asks. The good witch is educated from the intense spell she has cast.

"It's up to our heroes now and we can only give them hope and encouragement," she tells them. "The fear of us must go to Sarutama's island fortress and stop her while our warriors battle her monsters. Are you children brave enough to face Sarutama?"

They look at each other and step toward her. "We came this far with you, Miss Switch!" Rupert says. "We are with you all the way!"

Amelia stands up proudly. "I'll take any risk to get rid of Sarutama once and for all!"

Tetuya also wants to save the world from the evil witch. "I can help in case there are aliens and monsters you don't know about that Sarutama may have guarding her." Pigmon, now recovered from his ordeal, begins jumping around and speaking his monster talk. "Pigmon wants to go, too!"

"Fine," the good witch assures her. "You can guide us back to Sarutama's fortress. Pigmon, we are counting on you!" The little monster nods his head. "There is no time to lose! Hurry, Bathsheba!" she calls. Flying through the window, Miss Switch's broom, with her cat aboard, hovers over to the five brave Earth defenders. They all climb aboard and take off for Sarutama's island. High in the air over the Great Plains, Amelia says in a tiny voice to Tetuya, "I hope your heroes can stop them. Unless they succeed, it's the end of everything!"

CHAPTER 3: TO THOSE IN THE SHINING



round the world, the shimmering magic dust that Miss Switch had scattered toward the heavens had spread over every plain, valley and town. Most people don't even notice the ever-so-slight brightening of the sky as the pulsating auras hang over their heads, waiting for an answer.

Over by Wauwatosa, NY, every *kaya fan* wilder dream is coming true for a handful of talented folk. After three years of planning and hard work, they are finally filming their own version of *Destroy All Monsters* when the real Baronagon suddenly appears in Dana Foreman's viewfinder. He quickly swings his camera off Scott Walker, who is stomping across the open field in his best *kaya* performance to date. Stopping in mid-stride, Coy-Scott waves a claw at the cameraman. "Hey, Spielberg! I'm over here!" Dana continues filming and points behind and above his star, too amazed at what he sees to be able to say anything. Swinging his tail around, Scott follows the camera and sees Baronagon pushing through the trees on the other side of the clearing. "That ain't no Jerry Devil!" he yelps and charges for his marauder. Still in costume, he dives head first into the open cargo area.

The rest of the *Kaya Productions* crew has also seen the real monster approaching and break cover from where they are hiding in the tree line, awaiting their solo scenes. James Lancaster, who is wearing his Gamera costume, gets to the van at the same time as Scott and grabs Godzilla's tail. With a yank, he corals Scott just as he is about to reach the driver's seat. "Hold still! You know you can't drive with those back plates on!" Scott squirms back over the seats and crouches down in order for Dana to remove the Volvo

KAIJU KIDS

BY ROSSANA GANUZA
"GYM CLASS"



flies and undo the zipper of his monster suit. As Godzilla and Gamera are about to turn back into humans, the platform truck goes flying past with Rodan hanging onto the back for dear life. Dale Peple had always wanted to do a summation film, but this was turning out to be more than he had bargained for!

August Ragone, who had been directing the action from the opposite side of the field, raises his bullhorn: "You're going the wrong way!" Bob Johnson has also jumped on the truck and is trying to get his alien mask off. When he finally succeeds and sees that they are headed towards the monster instead of away from it, he jumps on the tub to get the Space Ranger behind the wheel to turn around. Instead, the driver gives him the finger.

Ed and Mariko Godziszewski are watching Evan Baker film their daughters, Chris and Cindy, playing the part of the Cosmos when Marc Duckworth, the company publicist, wheels up in a station wagon. Evan keeps on shooting as Baragon gets even closer to them. "That ain't G-Fest," Ed says, trying to convince him, "this is a real moment!" Momentarily lowering his camera, the young cinematographer sends them on their way, not wanting to miss the biggest thing so far in his budding amateur film career.

From the other direction, Chris Nickerson is fast approaching center stage in the Rest-A-Truck they've been using as both field headquarters and wardrobe department. August sees his security deposit going down the drain each time the big truck goes airborne, crossing the hard-packed ground and hitting scattered rocks left over from the last glacier. Melcho Godzilli Paul Gavres and Cyber-G Eric Yee are none too happy with the beating their costumes are taking in the back of the truck, as they themselves struggle to stay on board.

Dana is finally persuaded to get in the straight truck just as Baragon shoots a frigid blast in their direction. The freeze ray would've caught them if Paul didn't yank the overhead door down as soon as Dana was unceremoniously hoisted in by his battery pack. With the door closed, they have no light to see exactly who stepped on who's rig or landed on top of any prone crewmembers. And Dana wouldn't be hanging on the bullhead if he saw what Chris was seeing in his rearview mirror: Baragon is hot on their trail as they make it back across the field and try to find some cover in the thick trees.

August takes advantage of the distraction to head toward the pick-up truck which is coming at him way too fast, in his opinion. Gertrude Smith doesn't think so and just locks the brakes for a power slide on the hard ground. The top-heavy pipe-frame shooting platform on the truck's back slips out of the stake pockets and goes flying, along with alien Bob who happened to be standing up and hanging on to it. Rodan Dale wind up as soon

as the truck started moving and the air stream caught his wings: he conveniently ducked down and avoided the dislodged superstructure.

In his 24 years of making films and publishing Japanese sci-fi genre magazines, August has never seen a production go as badly as this one. Even wants the truck to make an extra pass in front of the camera before leaving the huge, open field. August figures that he's lucky to have gotten the pretty spectacular 360-degree turnaround on the approach without having been run over in the process. With a deft leap that would look convincing in any amateur sensu production, the daring cameraman jumps in the back of the truck and takes a kneeling position to film Baragon coming after them. Bob, the bruised and cowering alien, gets in the cab with his Space Ranger counter-part before the pick-up quickly disappears down the path the monster had come, dodging broken tree trunks and giant claw holes.

With the height advantage he gains by standing on his back legs, Baragon looks over the trees to see what might be moving—namely a bright yellow rental truck. Making his own path, he sets out after it with a mighty roar. Chris has made it onto the paved road and is pouring on the speed as they dash for safety. The monster turns and charges after them, crashing through the forest. As Baragon fires a freezing blast, they disappear into a tunnel carved through a convenient momentum. Soon, the ground shakes from the weight of the beast's final approach. Luckily, the truck is already heading full tilt for the opposite end of the tunnel as Baragon's super-chilled ray fills the space behind them with ice.

Scott and Dennis have also been able to put some distance between themselves and the monster. Not noticing which direction they are headed in, they soon arrive at Lake Ontario where Manda is wreaking havoc on the Seaway traffic. "There is a lake monster after all!" Scott exclaims. Stepping out of his costume, he digs amongst the scattered props and equipment for his laptop computer. "Wait until the gang hears about this!" he shouts hysterically.

"Forget about it, buddy!" says Dennis. "You want everyone to know that the mighty Godzilla and Gamera got run off the lot by Baragon and then lost in the bushes? We'll never live it down!"

"Don't worry," Scott laughs about the near disaster. "Nobody will hear about it from me!" Little do they realize that between Dana, Evan and every member of the crew who had access to a camcorder, their misadventures are most likely on someone's video. With a little editing, one of several entries in the next G-COM film contest should be a winner.

Scott flips his computer screen up anyway and is surprised to see Max Smith's message, "How can this be?" they both wonder. Struck

to a corner of the case is a small round metal disc called Kaigu Attack Alert. Sold as a gag gift for giant monster fans, no one ever expected it to do anything besides elicit smiles from fellow fans and odd looks from non-fans. "What if that thing works?" Dennis asks. "If it works, I'll be able to contact G-FORCE," Scott figures.

In Sceptertown, Missouri, Aaron Smith has been trying to establish contact with any G-fan who might be near a computer. Surtana's monster invasion has set off the Kaigu Attack Alert system that every true fan of Japanese science-fiction and fantasy always keeps close at hand. "Where's the G-FORCE when you need them?" Aaron fumes.

The whole mid-American area of Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Missouri, Arkansas, Kentucky and Tennessee trembles with the pent-up energy of the New Madrid Fault, set loose by Trelson's tunneling. Ultraman Shadow has also been using his force beam along the fault line to rip the continent in half. Roads and bridges have buckled and twisted into impassible tangles, isolating people and military units into manageable little clumps for Surtana's legions to conquer. Only backup power supplies and portable generators make it possible for humanity to remain in contact with associates scattered far and wide.

As an Xian spaceship hovers over his storm shelter trying to locate the source of his apocalyptic transmissions, Aaron wonders how the widespread fanbase is dealing with their local monsters. The Xian's alien technology doesn't seem to be able to penetrate his underground concrete bunker, so the craft finally leaves to destroy the familiar Gateway Arch in St. Louis.

Further south in Arkansas, terrestrial errors are taking a more personal approach to empowering the human race. A clutch of young, reptain-like Demozills is roaming the Delta, attacking everything that moves. The rural towns aren't receiving any help from the federal government with their "little problems" as long as giant monsters threaten the major cities. Surtana hasn't overlooked the country's vast hinterlands and her monster breeding program has paid off handsomely.

When the military and vicious G-fans attacked Demozills in New York, Surtana saw an opportunity and had her minions secretly remove some of the beast's eggs. They were quickly moved to a secret facility built by InGen down in Mexico, where Dean Devlin and Roland Emmerich were more than happy to oversee the care and training of the newly-hatched lizards.

"Revenge will be ours!" Devlin posted to the Centropolis Internet bulletin board. "Thanks to Surtana, my name will go down in history as the greatest monster maker of them

all. People in rubber suits will be a thing of the past and if you don't like it, TOO BAD!"

His boasting was laughed at by movie fans and ignored by karpologists. "Impossible!" replied Dr. Jim Walsh of the Openerama Island Project. "History will show that Mr. Devlin doesn't know the first thing about these mutants or even making movies about them, so there!"

The war of words will have to wait, however, as dozens of the huge reptiles calling the Big Lake Bottoms their home respond to Sartama's commands and set out on their mission. At the western end of the Big Lake Bridge, Dave Geyer mans the 50-caliber machine gun that he retrieved (along with other handy goods) from a retreating National Guard unit. When the sudden appearance of the floods was reported to the Maricopa County Sheriff's Department, deputies Medford and Wesman volunteered to check it out. No sooner did they pull onto the bridge when it started to sway from the earth motions and the reptiles broke their cover from the cyprus swamp below. With their automatic blurring, the two deputies dash over the disintegrating roadway toward Dave's position on the other side. Sliding across the Sportsman's Inn & Boat Shop parking lot by the highway, they wheel about and take up positions flanking Dave's Chevrolet with the artillery on top. "Now I know how Davy Crockett felt at the Alamo," Mike Medford fumes as he looks the situation over. Gary Wesman is more concerned with digging Dave's laptop computer out of the cauldron of mutants and snakes in the back of the Jeep. Reaching the passenger compartment, he asks his fellow science fiction fan just how bad it is in this neck of the woods.

"I don't have the foggiest," Dave admits. "These arthropods just started coming out of the lake and strange UFO-type things are all over the skies amazing folks. One of them was called Veritas's Vaden & Salvage Yacht!" That would definitely be cause to get his hunkies up and give him an excuse to take target practice on any arachnid reptilian lifeforce over four feet tall. The night-dwelling Dinanella fire the ball neatly, even if they are usually smart enough to keep cover from his well-placed gunfire.

The computer is finally located and is issuing a definitive signal: the Kaipu Attack Alert! Flipping it open, Mike Sweth's call to the Warriors of Good is on the screen. "Hello, G-FORCE!" Gary exclaims, showing it to his comrades. They stare in awe at the dire message.

"This can't be real!" Dave exclaims. Just then, Mike turns around and opens fire on two Dinanella smoking up behind them.

"It's as real as these ugly reptiles, I'll bet!" Mike agrees. He notices the collar that one of the lizards is wearing and cuts it off to ensure

one it. "What could this be?" His comrades just shake their heads, but Gary has an idea.

"Let's log on to the G-FORCE Net and see if any of the other kids might know." They have established a cyberlink over the years to keep in touch about all things Japanese science fiction and fantasy. The Kaipu Attack Alert signal was derived by some other than Rick Martin of the Ohio-based UltraCenter in order to warn fans when there is giant monster activity anywhere in the world. No bigger than a miniature battery, it can be placed in computers, cell phones, toy Beta Capuloids or wherever a devotee fan chooses. The online window of G-Net only shows Aaron's connection and his request for a roll call of fans. No one else has responded yet.

"Probably busy fighting monsters," Dave suggests. "Log on to let him know that we're okay and doing our part to scan the monster."

Gary keys it in and there is an immediate response from Aaron. [Good to hear. Save me a Dinanella hide and I'll trade you for a new Transmuter Megalon.]

[No good. Mike at a Bandai and we'll think about it.] With these formalities out of the way, the Arkkanian group wonders how to get in touch with the mysterious Miss Sweth. They inform Aaron. [It's most likely received her message with the help of the Kaipu Attack Alert. It somehow got an answer, even with the power off.]

[Liar, check something. I left mine in the house when the television announced the President's decision not to surrender.] He cracks the door to the shelter open and, not seeing any monsters, dashes for his barbecue-savaged home. Finding the television, he sees Miss Sweth's message. Aaron has fashioned his Kaipu Attack Alert into a modelism around the neck of his magnificent Kiyoko Bio-Guy, which has somehow managed to remain standing amidst the wreckage. There is no electricity, but the call to arms pulses brightly in the gathering dark.

Returning to his computer, Aaron tells his friends what he has seen and finds that Scott has logged on from somewhere south of Lake Ontario, no one had paid much attention to where they were going as they fled the rampaging Dragon. [It's got to be major] is his contribution from the far north.

In the meantime, Salco Geyso has also signed on from Holland and reports that Ropticon has responded. [Probably to get revenge for being excluded from our Month of Avarice Crockett exhibition!] he jokes. Even with his beloved Amsterdam under siege, Salco can still offer up his own particular brand of humor.

[We need to find out how we can help our heroes save the Earth from Sartama's mad plan] the Arkkanian fans post.

[Yes!] the others respond quickly, although no one has any ideas how to go about doing it.

In Kansas, Bruchman has been using the omnipresence of the Great Plains to his advantage. Soaring high above the vast flatlands, he can pick his targets with ease and drive down at his leisure to pick off unsuspecting humans. The Air Force is ineffective against his devastating smoking breath weapons and great flying speed. Knowing that the people of Earth do not appreciate his silence for world domination, Sartama has thought out in detail how to neutralize any military resistance. The idea has been crosschecked by alien spacecraft since the invasion began, working out bugs and artifacts that could interfere with his plans. What the humans have not destroyed, his invading karpis and mutants will.

Ovenrock Park has never seen the destruction that it now suffers as Bruchman loudly cracks overhead. Even the Santa Fe Towers is a pile of smoldering rubble. As the Shawnee Mission High School students and faculty tried to evacuate, the monster attacked the fleeing school buses with its claws and back. The ones that were carried aloft and dropped like so many dolls lay shattered in the lush surrounding wheat fields.

People had sought refuge in houses of worship as they have done for centuries, but ruthless monsters are not deterred by crosses or hallowed grounds. The Queen of the Holy Rosary Catholic Church was half-demolished when Bruchman landed on it, barely missing the sanctuary and the congregation within. His next stop would be the Leston Christian Center.

At the Museum of Radioactive Reptiles, Connie Goodnow and her three children have taken shelter in the basement of their converted suburban home. When her Kaipu Attack Alert went off, Connie quickly gathered her children and told them to stay in the reinforced sub-level, originally designed to withstand the fierce tornadoes that often ravaged the area. With no monsters yet in sight, she also had moved her computer downstairs.

Mike Miller in California had also come online to see what was going on in the rest of the world and had hoped to contact other karpis fans for advice. That was a totally new situation for him and a lot of people in America, Japan, had been regularly stampeded by rampaging karpis, but the United States seemed devoid of such things, at least until now.

[Maybe it's payback time for what happened to Dinanella in New York] Connie posted to him.

[You think that these monsters are attacking him?] Mike queried.

[Not really. Look at the sky.] Connie had noticed an unusual silvery haze high in the atmosphere just before her Alert started beeping so incessantly.

Mike peered up at his demolished office building and saw nothing but smoke from the many fires caused by Transmuter' whirling

attack on his city [Nothing but smog here] he reported. [Wish I had a ray gun or at least a plaser. I'd show that refugee from Davy Jones' Locker who's on top of the food chain around here!]

[We are under attack by Birdsaur] Connie advised him. [It would take Atargon to save us from this monster.]

Her daughter, Ashli, saw the message on the screen and asked, "But, Mom, Birdsaur is only one of Rodak's monsters! Remember when we were putting up the Space Giants display?"

Connie was surprised she remembered so much about the huge beast. "Yes, dear, but

now he has come into our real world, destroying our hometown and hurting people. He has to be stopped, but how?"

"I know!" piped in young Jack. "We can use Mom's radio to call Monster Island and get Godzilla to save us!" One of the items they had on display in the museum was a replica of the vacuum tube device the little boy had built to call his giant friends across the ocean from his home in Japan. Powered by imagination, he could talk to Mityra, Godzilla's son, when he was lonely or just wanted to visit his special monster friend. Connie had her doubts about the electrically-powered display with its interactive sound

system that was usually manned by a museum volunteer playing the part of Mityra, but at a time like this, what harm could it do?

"Let me sign off to Mike and we'll see if we can dig it up," she protested. But before she could complete her message, the two older children had run upstairs to retrieve the device, leaving little Ember behind as usual.

"Well Mothers or Gamers come save us, Mommy?" she asked. Connie looked at the gleam of hope in her youngest child's eyes and somehow knew that everything was going to be all right. □

TO BE CONTINUED ..

THE GODZILLA CHRONICLES

PART TWO

by John Rocco Roberto

Based on characters developed by Marc Cerasini

A light rain fell upon the forest clearing as the midday sun slowly began to set. After hours of intense rainfall, the sun was only now beginning to force its way through to the forest floor. As the last glimmer of twilight began to draw long shadows, two young deer, happy to be out of the downpour, ran into the clearing in their search for food. The evening air was filled with a cool, gentle breeze, as birds of all types began to greet the evening with song. The young bucks' playful manner, coupled with the birds' singing, provided the perfect picture of nature in balance. Suddenly, the bucks stopped, frozen in terror, their eyes glued to the horizon. Then, as quickly as they had appeared, the two bucks broke off, dashing as fast as they could back in the direction they had come. Slowly, not very distinct, at first, but growing steadily louder, a low, rhythmic thud came burning across the forest. One after another, the thudding grew louder and each time the forest ground shook more and more. In a flight of panic, the birds took off and headed up into the night sky, chirping frantically. As quickly as it had filled with life, the forest clearing was now abandoned and silent, only the rhythmic thudding gave any indication that something was alive and close by.

Godzilla trudged along the American countryside, the day was slowly turning to night and the heavy rains had let up. The small town which lay in ruins behind him was quickly becoming a faded memory to the King of the Monsters. He was still very tired, but he knew that he must reach the water soon. There he could rest and recover from his encounters. There he could forget about the strange creatures who caused him much trouble. Then was of the utmost importance in Godzilla's mind: he must find the ocean and he must find it soon.

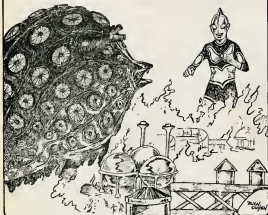
He continued through the countryside, tramping over trees and destroying everything and anything that blocked his path. Suddenly, Godzilla stopped. A strange, grinding noise began to come from the forest ahead of him. He had heard these sounds before and knew exactly what this would bring about. Out of the forest ahead of him came five US Army tank units. Series KS Heavy Armored Tanks, the pride of the US Godzilla Countermeasures program, these tanks were specially designed and constructed to combat Godzilla. Each unit carried Titanium missiles designed to penetrate the monster's thick hide, at least that was the theory, as the KS units had never actually gone up against Godzilla.

The King of the Monsters, however, had recognized these types of units before. To him, they were the same types of things the strange creatures used against him in the past and each time they had caused him considerable pain. Godzilla was determined not to give these strange creatures that chance again. Arching his head back, letting out a bellowing roar, Godzilla directed his atomic breath towards the tanks. Two of the tanks exploded instantly into flames and hundreds of fragments, while the remaining three tanks opened fire with their missiles. Two of the missiles arced wide, missing their target, but the third found its mark, hitting Godzilla square in the chest! Godzilla rolled back in pain, as there was a tremendous explosion, a bleeding, gaping wound had appeared where the missile had struck. Godzilla was enraged, his instinct told him that he must destroy these creatures and their strange devices before they could inflict any more damage. Radiation glowed around his back plates, as a blue-white flame sprang forth from Godzilla's mouth. At the same time the three tanks let off another round of Titanium missiles. One was caught in the full blast

of Godzilla's breath and exploded instantly. This knocked the second missile off its course, impacting at the monster's feet. The explosion rocked Godzilla off-balance and the King of the Monsters tumbled backwards into the mountainside, roaring as he was engulfed in a swirling mass of smoke and flames. This action inadvertently saved Godzilla's life, for the third missile was dead on its mark. Now, with Godzilla down and no target to lock onto, the missile dove towards the ground, impacting the water-logged soil not far from Godzilla's head. Stunned, bleeding and now covered with mud, Godzilla could not understand how these creatures were causing such great pain. He became desperate to do something. Out of the sky, three more missiles streaked toward him. Laying on his side, however, Godzilla was less of an imposing target. Only one missile hit its mark, burrowing itself into Godzilla's shoulder, as the others exploded behind him on the hillside. Godzilla was now bleeding from no less than three gaping wounds, and as rock and dirt fell down around him, his instinct struggled with what he was going to do.

The tanks in the mountainside began changing position to get a better lock on the now prone monster. Godzilla could hear the sound of the treads moving and realized the only possible answer: the strange little creatures were moving closer for the kill. Desperate, his instinct seized on a plan. It would be difficult and require tremendous amounts of his strength, but it might just be the only way of saving his life. The tanks continued their advance on Godzilla. They began opening fire with their artillery guns in the hopes of keeping Godzilla pinned down. These small shells were nothing to Godzilla, although the ones which exploded near his wounds caused the beast considerable pain. Ever closer, the tanks moved in. Closer. Closer. It cannot be said if it was conscious thought or instinct, but just as the tanks were about to reach their final position, Godzilla closed his eyes and concentrated; the tanks, which were now located directly over the monster's position, prepared to fire. Just then,

RETURN OF ULTRAMAN - EPISODE TWO
AFTER BEING FORCED TO RESIGN FROM
MAT, HIDEKI GON REDEMPS HIMSELF BY
SAVING MINAMI, THEN HE TRANSFORMS INTO
ULTRAMAN JACK TO FACE THE SEA DWELLING
KAIJU, TAKKONG!



Godzilla's back first glowed, but instead of a stream of radiation leaping from the monster's mouth, a burst of radiation was released from Godzilla's entire body, irradiating everything that surrounded the monster king. Trees, bushes, boulders—all exploded as the core of radiation expanded out from Godzilla's gargantuan form. The tank units never had a chance to fire. When the radioactive wall reached them, the electromagnetic pulse shorted out the guidance, communications and navigation systems. But the armor plating held; unfortunately, the armor on the Titanium missiles did not. In a flash of white light, all remaining missiles exploded, taking the army's newest weapons against Godzilla, the K5 Heavy Armored Tanks, with them.

As the smoke cleared, Godzilla remained lying in the field. He was seriously wounded, but his wounds would heal. What mattered most at this moment was that he was physically exhausted and needed to recharge his energy supplies. And there was only one place to achieve this. Slowly, somewhat unsteadily, Godzilla got to his feet. He changed direction from his heading towards the ocean, the ocean could wait. Now he headed towards what he needed most.

Ann Pfler surveyed the damage of what had once been the quiet town of Bakerfield, now a smoldering ruin. Standing next to the communication van, Ann held a Geiger counter in one hand, a complex series of readouts in the

other. Jim Crichton, covered in dirt and debris after a night of digging out survivors, came walking up to her. "Well?" Ann asked, without looking up at him.

"256 dead, 135 wounded and about 54 still missing," Jim answered, it was impossible not to notice the weariness in his voice. Ann looked up towards him, his face was covered in black soot, his uniform torn and ragged. Ann reached down to the thermos sitting on the floor besides her and offered a mug of strong black coffee to Jim. He took it eagerly and downed it in one gulp. "Thanks, I needed that," he said emptying the mug. "How about you?"

"Level 6 radiation and dropping rapidly," Ann said without looking up from the readouts. "We should be good here for another two hours. But after that we're all taking radiation poisoning."

"Well, we're about finished here anyway," Jim added. "Local fire and rescue teams seem to have things under control."

"Then we should get going," Ann answered, muttering that with the local authorities in control, their responsibility had now ended.

Jim looked at her a little sheepishly. "Uh, Johnny wants to do one more walk around, just to be sure."

Ann looked up from the readouts. "What is it with Roscoe?" the annoyance in her voice very evident. "He's arrogant and brash, acts as if he's the only person capable of doing the job and then, he performs these tricks with reckless regard for his own

safety."

"Oh, Johnny's all right," Jim said, handing Ann a cigarette from the pack he took from his top pocket. "You just don't know him as well as the rest of us do. He's been fighting Godzilla ever since the beast first appeared on American shores. We all have, but Johnny takes the whole thing personal and he gets a little possessive over it."

"I know, I'm the new guy," Ann added with a slight smile on her lips, "and that you guys have been together a long time now, but no one is going to accomplish anything if each member of this team acts like a one-man Rambo show."

"Don't think of Johnny as Rambo," Jim laughed. He walked around the van to get a

better look at the destruction. He had spent the entire night pulling bodies from the ruins of the town. He had looked into the faces of countless people whom he knew would not last until morning. Glazing over to the horizon, he added in a low, almost whisper, "Johnny just wishes he had the power of God."

Johnny Rocco and Bob Bendusky climbed over the ruins of what had once been a two-story house. Around them, police and fire rescue crews worked feverishly attending the wounded, freeing the trapped and identifying the dead and dying. The two had been working all night and had helped with the evacuation of no less than 47 people. Yet even though the majority of the townfolk had been accounted for and even though they were exhausted and knew that they were risking radiation poisoning, both Johnny and Bob refused to give up the search. As they climbed over what had been the roof of the building, the structure began to shiver. "Easy Johnny," Bob yelled over the rubble of debris. "This one's not too steady! It could go any minute!"

"I know," Rocco answered, "but I thought I heard something!" Crouching low, almost lying on the roof of the structure, Johnny tried to listen. It was not an easy job, considering the shrieks and cries that disturbed the morning around him. But from within the bowels of the ruined house, Johnny heard something. It was a faint but unmistakably steady thumping and it was coming from what appeared to be the center of the house. Jumping up, which caused another round of vibrations to begin, Johnny yelled, "We've got another one!"

Bob rushed over to Rocco's position and stooped down to listen just as the six rescue workers attached to Rocco's team joined them on the rooftop. "One, maybe two more individuals possibly trapped in the middle or basement of the house," Johnny said to the unit's commander. Special Fire Rescue Commander Raymond Johnson was a big stocky man with short, blondish hair. He had worked search and rescue ever since he had transferred from the Alabama State Troopers six long years ago; he had seen his fair share of both man-made and natural disasters, but nothing could have prepared him for the night he had just spent. Yet despite the crash course Commander Johnson was receiving in Godzilla Disaster 101, he had remained constantly professional and was determined to get the job done. Turning to his second-in-command, he barked, "I want the plans and basic structure of this building and I want 'em quick!" His southern accent was still as heavy as the day he had left the state. "If there's a simple, direct access into this house, I want to find it. Now move!" "Yes sir!" his second snapped, and ran off to pull the plans of the town that every rescue team had been supplied with.

Johnson looked around the building, then

turned towards Johnny. "It doesn't look too stable. We're not gonna be able to send more than one, maybe two down at a time."

"I know," Johnny answered, he was already getting out of his jacket and strapping on the harness. "Bob and I will be able to handle it."

Outside the communications van, Arm and Jim continued their conversation quietly—a stark contrast to what was happening inside the communications van. To the blaring sounds of "In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida," Tucker Guyson sat in the center of what could only be described as the high-tech technological hell-hole that was the communications van. All kinds of tracking equipment had been assembled together on makeshift shelves encompassing Tucker in a world of television screens and radio monitors. Scanning the radar and airwaves for any possible trace of Godzilla, the team had had a good look on the monster when they had stumbled upon Bakersfield, and now Tucker couldn't seem to find any trace of the creature. The electromagnetic pulse created during Godzilla's attack on the tanks had knocked out all forms of conventional radio and microwave communications, but Guyson wasn't going to let that little annoyance keep him from establishing contact.

Swiveling around in his chair to reach a panel of controls which sat behind him, Guyson adjusted the gain on the high resolution antenna. Operating the directional controls, he began the painstaking operation of slowly adjusting the antenna's position until he found the signal he was looking for. Ever so slightly, he adjusted the knob and ever so slightly, the antenna moved. Slowly, very faint at first, the low, rhythmic pulse of the G-Force International Tracking Network came into the speakers. Ever so slightly, he adjusted the knob until the signal locked into place. Then, by adjusting the gain and boosting the reception by bypassing the power inputs, the signal burst over the loud speakers, drowning out the sounds of Iron Butterfly. Locking the antenna onto G-Force's vast satellite network, he entered the commands into the main computer terminal to begin searching for any sign of apparent radiation. While this form of information gathering was far from accurate, it was the only possible way of tracking Godzilla until normal radio contact could be re-established with G-Force HQ. With the signal coming in, Guyson smiled at himself. Now all he had to do was sit back and wait for the information he needed to come to him.

Rocco lowered himself down the rope, through the collapsed floors and crushed plaster boards that had once been a house, the crushed hopes and dreams of a lifetime he here and there. Johnson's team had located the main staircase of the house and, after breaking through the remains of an attic window, Rocco

was now using the staircase's ruined structure as a shaftway through the debris. As he slowly inched his way towards the basement, every now and then his foot would knock into a wall or support beam, sending a shower of plaster and debris down on him as the whole structure shook.

As he moved past the destruction, Johnny could see the shattered remains of a family's life which had been quickly and senselessly snuffed out. He had seen this same image too many times today. Lower and lower he went, into the bowels of the structure towards the basement. From the rubble scattered around him, Johnny could tell that the attic of this house had held many memories, including those from childhood as indicated by the many kindergarten drawings. A slight man of plaster came down on him, looking up, he could see Bob peering down through the opening as he, too, prepared to join Rocco.

Suddenly, Johnny caught something out of the corner of his eye. "Hold it up!" he shouted towards the opening and Bob, who was slowly making his way down.

"What's up?" Johnson yelled down towards Rocco.

"I'm not sure yet," Johnny answered, "just hold it up a second." Lying half-buried under furniture and crushed plaster board was the arm of what Johnny regrettably knew was a small child. The broken remains of a doll he just out of reach of its small, tender, outstretched hand. Swinging himself on the rope and trying desperately not to disturb the already unstable structure, Johnny reached the section of the house which had undoubtedly been the child's bedroom. Slowly, very carefully, he began shifting the debris. There was a low rumble as plaster flakes began showering down on him, he stopped and as things settled down, he once again continued. Soon he had revealed the golden locks of the young girl's hair and soon after, her pretty, young face. Her unfocused blue eyes stared blankly towards the future she would never know, as if the hopes of childhood were quickly and terribly torn asunder from her. Johnny had seen this look too many times today, if it fact too many times in his life, but he knew that this image—the image of the little girl with the tear-stained face, desperately reaching for her doll—would stay with him forever.

There was a smattering of plaster and Bob appeared next to Rocco. "What's up?" Bob could not see past Johnny, but he did notice the look on his face. From below, the thudding had started up again.

"Nothing," Johnny answered, pushing Bob onward. Taking a deep breath and putting a most determined look on his face, he said, "Let's go save a life," and the two continued towards the basement of the house. □

TO BE CONTINUED...

KOLLECTIBLE KAIJU

WHAT'S NEW & HOT IN THE WORLD OF JAPANESE SCI-FI COLLECTIBLES

by Jim Cirrone

"Do I really have room for this?" is becoming a common refrain among kaiju figure collectors, as new merchandise is being introduced on what seems a daily basis from large manufacturers and "garage kit" companies alike. No kaiju character is considered too obscure nor any item too expensive as everyone and his brother rushes to capitalize on the kaiju boom that is currently inundating Japan and as a by-product, the US collectors market, as well.

Bandai Toho Kaiju Figure Series

In early Fall '98, Bandai rounded out their *Godzilla Island* line of 6" vinyl kaiju figures with the release of *Mecha King Ghidorah* and *Destroyer* (final form). Since then, Bandai has changed the name of the line to the *Toho Kaiju Series* with recent issues of the same figures sporting newly updated tags. The next two releases came in late October from the new *Mothra* film: *Rainbow Mothra* and *Cretaceous Period King Ghidorah*. These figures retail in Japan for ¥600 and ¥900 respectively, the *Cretaceous Ghidorah* figure, in particular, sports an excellent sculpture and is arguably the strongest figure of the entire line. Additionally, a clear version of the *Rainbow Mothra* was available exclusively in Japanese theatres showing *Mothra 3*.

Next up in the series, Bandai will introduce a *Godzilla 1954* for ¥600 and will easily be one of the most anticipated figures among collectors, as a vinyl toy representation has never existed before. Rumors abound that Bandai plans to continue releasing figures in the 6" scale Toho kaiju series, including *Gabara* and *Titanosaurus*, although confirmation could not be obtained at press time.



(Top row, left to right) Bandai's *Godzilla Island* series 6" vinyl figures *Mecha King Ghidorah* and *Destroyer* (final form), sporting full spread wings. (Second row, left to right) Bandai's *Toho Kaiju Series* *Rainbow Mothra* and *Cretaceous Period King Ghidorah* (clear version and standard issue). (Above right) Bandai's *Super Dragon King Ghidorah* 1999 vinyl figure. (Bottom row) The new kids on the block: Bandai's *Godzilla 1954* (left) and *Owl Kaiju Series Hyper Gyoze* (middle) and *Gamera 1999* (far right) 6" vinyl figures.





(Left) Bandai's Evolving Heavy Armored Mothra 19" vinyl figure. (Second row, left) Bandai's Mothra Kaiju History 4" vinyl figures. (Second row, right) Advent for M-1's Matango real type vinyl figure. (Third row, left and right) Bandai's Perfect Mothra 2' candy toy figure set. (Bottom) Vending display for HG Godzilla 5



Bandai Mothra 3 Vinyl Figures

In addition to the smaller scale figures, Bandai also introduced two large scale vinyl figures in conjunction with the theatrical release of *Mothra 3: King Gidorah Attacks*. The first of these items is *Evolving Heavy Armored Mothra 1999* for \$1500. This figure is similar to Bandai's *Rainbow Mothra* figure from 1997 with additional body plates and wings to transform the adult form Mothra into its armor-plated alter ego. Also included is a 4" mini armored Mothra Larva.

The most impressive item by far, however, is the over 1' tall *Super Dragon King Gidorah 1999* vinyl figure. This latest vinyl incarnation of Toho's three-headed space dragon as seen in *Mothra 3* is probably Bandai's largest standard size figure to date, edging out the 14" *Mecha King Gidorah* figure first released in 1991 in both head-to-tail length and overall bulk.

Upcoming Gamera III Figures

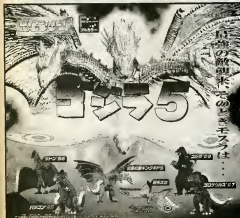
As the release of Daim's third kaiju egi for the 90s, *Gamera III: The Awakening of Bryn*, draws near, Bandai is gearing up to flood Japanese toy stores with vinyl kaiju figures from the film. First up is the late January release of 6" *Gamera 1999* and *Hyper Gyaos* figures (\$600 each), in the same scale as the popular *Godzilla Island* line, followed in late February by a similarly scaled *Irys* figure (\$980). Also planned for a late February release is a box set of 6" vinyl figures featuring the chiseled *Gamera* and all his kaiju foes.

In regards to larger items, Bandai will release *Phoenix Shooter Gamera* (rumored to feature the monster's ultimate weapon as seen during the new film's climax) and a *Gamera 1999 20"* vinyl figure, which will retail in Japan for \$10,000.

Of interest to those collectors who enjoy "garage kit" toys, Kuryodo and Xebec Toys will release a series of highly-detailed *Gamera* action figures sculpted by Shinobu Matsunara. The figures will include *Gamera 1999* with secret ultimate weapons and smaller *Hyper Gyaos*, and new kaiju villain, *Irys*. For more information and photos, check out Kuryodo's web site at <http://www.kuryodo.co.jp>.

Bandai Kaiju Candy & Caprice Toys

The kaiju candy toy arena continues to explode with the release of newly new *Mothra 3* tie-in items. The first is *Mothra Tensho* (*Mothra Appears!*), a series of ten 1" figures, packed one figure per egg capsule for \$100.





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Forget Frankenstein, Marmitt Conquers the World! (Clockwise, from far left) Marmitt's Vinyl Paradise series **Godzilla 1965**, **Godzilla 1966**, **Godzilla 1964** (type II) and **Gigan 10"** figures (Bottom) Vinyl Paradise series **Mothra Adult** (upper left), **Mothra Larva** (bottom left), **USA Godzilla** (middle) and **USA Baby Godzilla 2-figure set** (right)



An equal blend of new and previously issued figures, this set features **Horus Godzilla**, **USA Godzilla**, **Space Godzilla**, **Mothra**, **Godzilla '93**, **Mothra Larva**, **Aqua Mothra**, **Rainbow Mothra**, **Armor Mothra**, **King Ghidorah** and **Cretaceous King Ghidorah**.

Following Bandai's popular **Monster Museum** and **Godzilla Island** candy toy figure sets comes **Perfect Mothra**, a set of twelve 2" fully-painted figures available in two parts for \$500 each. Unfortunately, outside of translucent gold glitter **Armored Mothra** and **Cretaceous King Ghidorah** figures, all the figures in this set have been previously released.

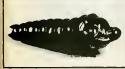
Other candy toy releases include an all-new set of 4" mini vinyl figures called **Mothra Kaiju Retuden** (*Mothra Kaiju History*). Included are **Horus Godzilla**, **Rainbow Mothra**, **USA Godzilla** and **Cretaceous King Ghidorah**, individually packaged for \$200 each.

Cashing in on the super hot **High Grade (HG)** capsule toy collectors market in Japan comes **HG Godzilla 5**, a set of 3" fully-painted PVC figures starting for \$200 each. The set includes **Godzilla '89** (*Brigade*), **Rodan '56**, **Baragon**, **Gorath**, **Armored Mothra** and **Cretaceous King Ghidorah**. (An *HG* series year-end review that was initially planned for this issue's *Unleashable Kaiju* will appear in the next issue of *Kaiju-Fan* -Ed.)

Upcoming **Gamera III** candy toy releases will include **Hyper Gamera**, a set of 4" PVC figures including **Gamera '95**, **Gamera '96**, **Gamera '99**, **Hyper Gyaos** and **Irys**. Also planned is **HG Gamera 3** which will include **Gamera 1999**, **Flying Form Gamera 1999**, **Irys**, **Hyper Gyaos**, **Jager** and **Zigra**.



M-Ichigo Kaiju Vinyl Series
As reported last issue, **M-Ichigo (M-I)** will produce a real type **Matango** vinyl figure available exclusively via a special coupon included with the current Toho video and laser disc release of the same film. However, it was



not known at the time that two different figures would be produced). The L.D. offers a half-man/half-Matango figure, while the video offers a Matani figure (portrayed by Kuro Mizuno), as seen eating the mainframe at the film's climax. Both highly-detailed figures are in scale with most Bandai 8" vinyl kaga.

Marmat Vinyl Paradise Series

Marmat's bid to dominate the kaga vinyl market knows no bounds, so the company continues to expand their Vinyl Paradise line of 10" figures, which now totals over 70 characters. The newest Toho monster entries include three new versions of the King of the Monsters: *Godzilla 1964* (type 1) from Ghidrah, *The Three Headed Monster*, *Godzilla 1965* from *Monster Zero* and *Godzilla 1966* from *Godzilla vs. the Sea Monster*. Also in release is *Gigan*, issued in blue and green color variations, USA *Godzilla*, a USA *Baby Godzilla* 2-figure set and *Mothers Adult and Larva* figures, both featuring blue and red eye color variations. All Marmat Toho vinyl kaga retail for \$40.00, including the *Modora Larva* which retails for \$30.00. Marmat has also added to their line of *Giant Robo* and *Magnus Tazuki* (*Space Giant*) vinyl kaga figures with the release of *Raigun* from *Giant Robo* and four *Space Giant* kaga, *Sansargira*, *Pidora*, *Kanuki* and *Granula*, all of which retail for \$35.00.

In other areas, Marmat has rounded out their Vinyl Para Baby series of 5" *Ultra Q* kaga 2-figure sets with the release of *Jurra* & *M-L*, *Pagos* & *Tarantula* and *Sadler* & *Mangler*. And as if Marmat's productivity isn't enough for even the most consummate kaga collector to keep up with, the company has now decided to issue an even larger series of figures called the Vinyl Paradise Gold Series. The first releases from this highly-detailed line of 12" painted vinyl figures include *Eyon* and *Darkoon* from *Mirrorman* and *Bakura* and *Zaron* from *Spectruman*, all are in perfect scale with Marmat's Super Action Heroes line of 12" poseable figures, which includes both *Mirrorman* and *Spectruman* (see "Collectible Kaga" in *Kapa-Fun* #6 -56).

Medicom Real Action Heroes

Medicom has released a 12" *Godzilla 1962* figure as part of its Real Action Heroes line, which features articulated Combat Joe-style bodies (similar to Hasbro's G.I. Joe) outfitted with costumes of popular Japanese sci-fi



(Top row) Marmat's Vinyl Paradise series 10" figures *Pidora* (left) and *Sansargira* (middle) from *Space Giant* and *Raigun* (right) from *Giant Robo*. (Middle row) Marmat's Vinyl Paradise Gold series *Bakura* (left), *Eyon* (right) and *Darkoon* (bottom row, left) 12" figures. (Bottom row, right) Medicon's *Film Science* release figure.

movie and TV character. A limited edition version of the Godzilla '62 includes a grayish-green Godzilla "sea," while the standard issue is gray. Both versions retail for \$12,800.

R.I.C./X-Plus Take Kapa Vinyl Figures

R.I.C. Company, Ltd. continues its line of limited edition "garage toy" vinyl figures with the release of the *Abominable Snowman* from the 1955 Toho film, *Half Human*, and *Megarons*, the giant prehistoric insect from *Rodan*. The 30cm tall *Half Human* figure includes an alternative body type (as seen in publicity photos), a wooden display base, and small-numbered plate for ¥9800. Also available is a *Half Human Snowchild* figure for

¥7800. Both figures are limited to 1,200 pieces each and are available in brown, gray and white versions. The *Megarons* figure is a whopping 65cm long and comes in both green and brown variations. Limited to only 500 pieces, it carries a hefty price tag of ¥19,800.

Next up from R.I.C. is a USA *Godzilla*, a glow in the dark *Matsugo*, *Sanda* and *Gaira* from *War of the Garguises* and an original styled *Gamera* from *Gamera the Invincible*.

Marusan Electric Attack Kapa Strategy

Since mid-summer, Marusan has been releasing a 7" vinyl kapa line that includes a mix of original and re-issue vintage-styled figures. Included in this series is *Godzilla*, *Mothra*

Adash, *Goreasaurus*, *Baragos*, *Ebirah*, *Megara*, *Sanda*, *Gaira* and a *Mothra Larva* pair for ¥2400 each. Future releases include a 6th-styled *King Ghidorah* and the *A-Cycle Light Ray Tank* from *Monster Zero*. This series also includes a number of *Daisen kapa* figures which will be spotlighted next issue.

(Far left, top to bottom) Marusan's Electric Attack Kapa Strategy *Megara*, *Sanda* and *Gaira* 7" retro style vinyl figures. (Below, left to right) R.I.C.'s *Half-Human Abominable Snowman* vinyl figure, as seen in the film (with *Snowchild* figure) and in publicity photos. (Bottom right) R.I.C.'s huge *Megarons* vinyl figure from *Rodan*.



PRODUCT REVIEWS

GODZILLA™ MOVIE STUDIO TOUR

Hybrid CD-ROM for Windows 3.1, Windows 95 & Macintosh
Released by Premier Systems Inc.
Suggested retail price: \$19.99

Review By Otis Gajjas

This "hybrid" CD-ROM probably belongs in most kaja fans' collections, as it has a lot of Toho movie entertainment features. It appears to have been made by Toho Co. Ltd. and distributed by Premier Systems in this country. It has many fascinating features, but almost all of them have limitations that will disappoint most users.

The premise is a tour of a virtual Toho studio. There is appropriate music and an oddly mechanical voice narration for the first part of the tour. There are appropriate sound noises during the rest of the tour. The visitors board a train and are taken to studio buildings that house the various departments. The visitors have the choice of going left or right to travel to the departments. The tour also has a "Skywalk" ride that takes the train on a short, elevated ride around the studio. In some departments, there are interesting but limited video clips of real Toho films in production.

The Sound Department allows the visitors to select sound effects to go with three clips from G movies. The Museum has a database on 22 great kaja, including Goroanaru™, Baragoo™, Menda™ and Vana™. The Museum data includes holograms, photographs, brief biographies and voices of the monsters. The Library has posters available for viewing, including several non-G movies. The Library also has clips from six Heisei series G movies (Godzilla vs. Mothra, Godzilla vs. King Ghidorah, Godzilla vs. Bio-Beast, Godzilla vs. Mecha-Godzilla, Godzilla vs. Space Godzilla and Godzilla vs. Destroyah). In the Publicity Department, visitors can design their own posters.

There are two "gift shops" from which visitors can download greeting cards, day planners, mouse pads, things-to-do sheets,

lithographs, floppy disk and video labels, fax cover sheets, postcards and more. There is a kids section with similar super-deformed Gaps and Baby G-themed products.

In the main Film Studio, visitors can assemble their own Godzilla™ movie by selecting one of three camera footage to be edited into the short movie. Then the visitor travels to the Theater to screen the final production.

As exciting as all those features sound, many of them have limitations. Since this is an almost strictly read-only disc, the user is hampered by the inability to easily stop the

almost postage stamp size with the rest of the monitor being taken up inexcusably by a static theater interior. The viewing would be much more enjoyable if it won full screen instead of a 1"x 2" box.

The clips from the Heisei movies shown in the Library puzzlingly have three small identical screens instead of one large one, thus reducing the clarity and amount of information for no obvious reason.

The posters made in the Publicity Department with real images of Bagan and Dogoras, while printable, are rather limited. The real Toho posters displayed in the Library are beautiful, but I have not figured out any way to download or print them.

The floppy disk label drawings are not compatible with the standard, US six-label adhesive sheet. The greeting cards print the images in the middle of the page making it difficult to fold into a conventional greeting card configuration.

These and other odd features detract from some of the fun, but I love the filmmaking department and especially the Sound Department feature. Being able to print the paper with images of my favorite Godzilla™ (1962's, Kai-Gai from King Kong vs. Godzilla) and other features I haven't mastered yet, make it worth the \$19.99.

Review By Paul Gavins

It was with great satisfaction that, while browsing my local Computer City in Baltimore, MD, I ran across this product. I should first mention that this is a hybrid CD-ROM, formatted for both Windows & Macintosh. I hurried home to install this on my PC and after several attempts at installation (more likely my fault than the disc's), the program was up and running. It should be noted at this point that this is not intended as a game, but more a multi-media activity. Upon entering the virtual theme park, the user has a number of options for activities. I will briefly discuss each.

One immediately notices two life-size replicas of Godzilla and Mothra in the distance. However, the user can not approach these; they can only be more closely inspected via the overhead tramway, which is somewhat like a rollercoaster: tour around the perimeter of the park. I started out in the Monster Museum, which houses a database of photos, sounds and pertinent information on virtually all of the Toho kaja. The next stop was to



program or change the progress of many features, I also haven't found a way to load any of the information displayed onto my hard drive. Getting from virtual building to virtual building is time-consuming.

The viewable area is much smaller than my 17" monitor. Then the static, interior features of the train take up about half the remaining viewable area. In effect, that leaves only one-third of the screen displaying information of the tour. However, once the visitor leaves the train and enters the departments, the screen has more usable information.

After the visitors have assembled their movie in the Film Studio, the finished product is shown in the Theater, but the screen is

view classic Toho movie fight scenes in Quick Time video. This feature is great, although the scenes are limited only to the Heisei G-films. It seems that throughout this disc, Toho

acknowledges the classic films, but is more interested in promoting their current level of special effects. Not surprising.

The core activity and likewise, the most

time-consuming, involves stringing together film clips provided in an off-the-shelf fashion in the Movie Studio to create your own unique kagu epic. This part takes a few minutes to learn to use correctly, but it is not difficult. Additionally, there are Quick Time movies here depicting various behind the scenes aspects of real Toho film production.

From the Movie Studio, you go to the Sound Studio to view your film while adding sound effects which you select in real-time from a petagram-coded mixing board. Having accomplished this, your movie can now be viewed in the park's theatre.

Other applications on this CD-ROM include a fairly complete movie poster catalogue and a workshop to create and print your own movie poster designs. Lastly, there are two Gift Shops at which one can print kagu greeting cards, day planners, letterhead, video labels, blank storyboards, etc. Best of all, there is original concept artwork and authentic autographs available, as well as a short, named coloring book. These are probably the neatest of the printable items.

To sum up, this is a unique and fun item for \$19.99. I suspect, but do not know for sure, that it may be a reworking of a previous Japanese-released product, although these do not seem to be any obvious indications of this. All in all, buy it while you can!



Various screen shots provide examples of the features found on Godzilla Movie Studio Four.

MATANGO (1963)

Released by Toho Video
Color/90 minutes/Hi-Fi Mono
TohoScope
VHS: TG-45735
Japanese retail price: ¥5,500
L.D.: TL-12546
Japanese retail price: ¥6,000

Review By Jim Cironella

After nearly a decade of being unavailable in Japan, director Ishiro Honda's 1963 sci-fi thriller, *Matango* (released as *Attack of the Mushroom People* in the US), has now been re-released on home video and laserdisc. For those who are unfamiliar with this minor masterpiece, the story involves a group of people (a doctor, his first mate, a millionaire, a pop star, a writer, a professor and his young female student—no *Golligan's Island* comparisons, please) who become shipwrecked on an uncharted island, only to find that there is very little to eat, save for a strange variety of mushroom that has rampantly taken root throughout the desolate island. Soon, the eastways not only find themselves struggling for survival against the island's mysterious humanoid inhabitants, but amongst themselves, too, as hunger and lust reduce nearly everyone to a

barbaric state. In the film's shocking denouement, no one escapes with his or her body and sanity intact.

For this uniquely personal film, Honda has assembled an all-star cast of familiar Toho sci-fi film actors including Akira Kubo, Hiroshi Kozuma, Kenji Sahara, Yoshio Tsuchiya and Kumi Mizuno. The diversity and complexity of the characters they portray could in itself take an entire article to explain.

As with all previous Toho video and laserdisc releases, *Matango* is of the highest quality obtainable. While the print appears to be the same as the one used for the original Toho laser disc and video release in the mid-1980s, a full-length theatrical trailer not previously available has now been included in both formats. It is refreshing to be able to view this film in both its original widescreen aspect ratio and in full color, unlike the pan & scan, redated 16mm transfers or black & white television prints commonly used for unlicensed tapes that have been circulating throughout the US fan market for years. Unfortunately, Toho's neglect of the Western market has done a great injustice to films such as *Matango*.

The packaging design is moody and atmospheric and, from a few small photos of the cast, favors Toho leading lady Kumi Mizuno as seen during the film's mushroom-eating climax. Reports that Mizuno will make an appearance in the upcoming *Godzilla Millennium*



may have influenced the exclusive promotion of her character on this product.

All in all, *Matango* is a worthwhile release to obtain, whether you have seen this film before or are enjoying it for the very first time.

KAIJU BYTES

The Guide To Japanese Sci-Fi Resources On The World Wide Web

by Aaron J. Smith

The Official Tsuburaya Productions Home Page

<http://www.ultraman.co.jp>

First off, kudos to Tsuburaya Productions for being the first Japanese sci-fi film & television producer to present a website in bilingual format. There are both Japanese and English versions of this site available and for those Western fans who do not read or are not fluent in Japanese, it's nice to be able to understand what is on a foreign language website for a change. Now, if only other companies like Toho would follow suit...

At first glance, Tsuburaya Productions' home page resembles many of the websites that one might find being put together by fans of Ultraman, which is not necessarily a bad thing. Quite often, corporate websites can leave one feeling cold from all the commercialism and technological sophistication that exudes from them—Sony's official Godzilla website being a prime example of this—so the simple approach of Tsuburaya Productions' website is appealing as far as aesthetics go. Unfortunately, like many corporate websites, there is little useful information that a fan would like to read (at least at the time this article was written).

The English language pages consist of the following five separate areas, updated regularly:

- **TSUBURAYA MESSAGE** features a holiday greeting from company president & CEO, Kazuo



The layout of the Official Tsuburaya Productions Home Page provides a refreshing change from the coldness of most corporate websites

Tsuburaya, and previously contained press releases concerning the newest hero, *Ultraman Gaia*.

- **ULTRA EVENT** detailed the itinerary of this past summer's 1998 Ultraman Festival and currently provides information on Ultraman-themed shops and restaurants in and around Japan.

- **PRODUCTION INFORMATION** has featured "interviews" with *Ultraman Gaia*'s live action director Hirochika Murashi, special effects director Kazuo Sagawa and actor Maria Theresa Gow, who plays Agent George Leland in the new series, as well as a blurb on a Brazilian magazine that covers Japanese fantasy. Currently, this page provides a brief rundown of the three latest Ultra hero television programs for fans in the West who may have not yet seen them.

- **TPC INTERNATIONAL** describes the company's international marketing strategy of Ultraman and invites inquiries into licensing opportunities.

- **TPC HISTORY** is a brief timeline of the company's existence, as

well as a somewhat incomplete listing of the programs that they have produced over the years.

Overall, this website currently lacks anything really useful. Photographs are sparse and video clips, the staple of many great fan-produced Ultra pages, were nowhere to be found. I was expecting to find pages dedicated to the making of the special effects in the various Ultra hero series, interviews with past and present cast and crew mem-

bers and detailed photos from the TPC archive—everything one would come to expect from an official site. TPC has certainly made a decent effort, but I was left wanting so much more. I should also point out that the Japanese pages sport many more extras, such as an on-line shopping page and a bulletin board system.

Thankfully, TPC wants to hear your comments about their website and has provided an e-mail address for submitting fan feedback at tpcintl@tsuburaya-prod.co.jp. Write to them today and let them know what you'd like to see

CLUB TOKYO The Godzilla Virtual Museum

<http://clubtokyo.simplenet.com>

If you are an avid collector of Godzilla toys (and who isn't?), then Club Tokyo: The Godzilla Virtual Museum should be on your list of Godzilla websites to visit. Founded by Richard Cox and Michael Johnson, Club Tokyo consists of photographs and reviews of

the myriad of Godzilla toys and collectibles that have flooded the market. A majority of the toys covered are the more recent items from Bandai, although there are sections that cover toys from other companies, as well.

Club Tokyo is basically divided into nine areas, each section devoted to a particular style of collectible or area of collecting. Most of the items covered are from Michael's and Richard's personal collections, although they do invite and frequently receive contributions from other collectors as well.

The **FIGURES** section is by far the largest and covers many of the vinyl toys that have been produced over the years, from the various Godzilla figures released by Bandai in 1983 to M-1's recent Shobijin figures, the twin fairies from *Mothra*. There are far too many cool items to mention individually, but other companies covered include Bullmark, Popy, Yamakatsu, Marmit and Trendmasters.

CANDY TOYS generally includes toys and figures that are smaller in size (anywhere from 1" to 4"), which come packaged either with candy or in a vending machine capsule. This section is also fairly extensive and features many neat items from as early as 1992 up to the present.

Sections currently under development include **POSTERS**, which is self explanatory, **PROTOTYPES**, which currently features a prototype of a Trendmasters' MechaGodzilla figure, as well as early pre-production sketches of Space Godzilla, and a **MISCELLANEOUS** section for items that don't fit into other categories. There's also a **PAPERWORK** section to feature various toy catalogs and instruction booklets and a **TEXTURAL INFO** category that currently contains an extensive listing of products based on the TriStar Godzilla movie. Finally, a **LINKS** section provides easy access to the many online retailers who carry

Godzilla products.

All in all, it's nice to see such a comprehensive Godzilla collection like Club Tokyo online, especially with the items having been photographed and described so well. If you're like me, many Godzilla toys are out of reach because of the high prices, but websites like Club Tokyo offer the aspiring collector a chance to see what they have missed. And if price is not a problem for you, then it's a great way to get a glimpse of collectibles that you may want to buy, since the websites of many Japanese toy retailers don't have photographs of all the

items that are available for sale.

KALJU ON THE WEB

After a brief hiatus while changing servers, Aaron Smith's Godzilla News at <http://www.monsterzero.org>, one of the Internet's best websites dedicated to reporting the latest information on all areas of Japanese monster films, is back online! Visit Godzilla News today and be sure to sign up for the Japanese Monster Mailing List in order to receive all the latest news via e-mail.

Additionally, Aaron has now expanded the scope of Monsterzero.org with the addition of **HIENSHIN ONLINE!**, a Japanese sci-fi website by August Ragone and Bob Johnson. Check it out at <http://www.monsterzero.org/hienshin> today!



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